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THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

**ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY:**

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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN.







VAMBÉRY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM CENTRAL ASIA.

*Photographed in Teheran, 1863.*

# THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLES

THE MEMOIRS OF  
ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

VOLUME II



LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN  
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# From London to Budapest





## CHAPTER VII

### FROM LONDON TO BUDAPEST

I HAVE often been asked how it was that, after the bitter disappointment I had experienced in my native land on my return from Asia, and after the brilliant reception accorded to me in England, I yet preferred to settle down permanently in Hungary.

People have been surprised that I should choose a quiet literary career, whereas my many years of intimate intercourse with various Eastern nations might have been turned to so much better account, and a practical, active career would have been so much more in keeping with my character. All these questions were asked of me at the time in London, but filled as I then became with a sense of oppression and a great longing for home I could not give a satisfactory answer to these queries. Now that the cloud has lifted, and my vision is clear, now that sober reflection has taken the place of former rapture and exultation, the causes which influenced my decision are perfectly clear. I see now that I could not have acted differently ; that

the step I took was partly the result of my personal inclination and views of life, and partly influenced by the circumstances of my birth and bringing up, and the notions then generally prevailing in Hungary ; nor have I cause or ground to regret my decision.

In the first place I have to confess that in England, notwithstanding the noisy, brilliant receptions I had, and all the attention paid to me, no one ever made me any actual proposal with a view to my future benefit, and no one seemed at all disposed to turn to account my practical experiences in the service of the State or of private enterprise. The Memorandum about the condition of things in Central Asia, written at the time in Teheran at the request of the British Ambassador there, had duly found its way to Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister. The gray statesman received me most kindly ; I was often a guest at his private house, or dined with him at Mr. Tomlin's, of Carlton House Terrace, or at Sir Roderick Murchison's, of 16, Belgrave Square. At his initiative I was invited to other distinguished houses, for the merry old gentleman was much entertained by my lively conversation and my anecdotes from Asia, which I used to relate after dinner when the ladies had retired. My stories about the white ass of the English Embassy at Teheran, of diplomatic repute, and similar amusing details of court life in Persia and the Khanates of Central Asia,

tickled the fancy of the most serious, sober-minded of these high lords, and went the round in the fashionable West End circles. But for all that they saw in me merely the "lively foreigner," the versatile traveller, and if here and there some interest was shown in my future, it amounted to asking what were my latest travelling plans, and when I thought of setting out in search of fresh discoveries. As if I had not been on the go for two-and-twenty years, ever since I was ten years old! as if I had not battled and struggled and suffered enough! And now that for the first time in my life I had lighted on a green bough and hoped to have accomplished something, was I again straightway to plunge into the vague ocean of destiny? "No, no," I reflected; "I am now thirty-two years old, without for one moment having enjoyed the pleasures of a quiet, peaceful life, and without possessing enough to permit myself the luxury of resting on my own bed, or of working comfortably at my own table." This uncertain, unsatisfactory state of things must come to an end sometime; and so the desire for rest and peace necessarily overruled any inclination for great and ambitious plans, and nipped in the bud all projects which possibly might have made my career more brilliant, but certainly not happier than it afterwards turned out.

The kind reader of these pages who is familiar with the struggles and troubles of my childhood, who has followed me in thought on the thorny path

of early youth, and knows something of my experiences as self-taught scholar and tutor, will perhaps accuse me of dejection, and blame me for want of perseverance and steadiness of purpose. Possibly I have disregarded the golden saying of my mother, "One must make one's bed half the night, the better to rest the other half." I did give way to dejection, but my resolve, however blameworthy it may be, should be looked upon as the natural consequence of a struggle for existence which began all too early and lasted sadly too long. Man is not made of iron, too great a tension must be followed by a relaxation, and since the first fair half of my life began to near its ending, my former iron will also began to lose some of its force. The wings of my ambition were too weak to soar after exalted ideals, and I contented myself with the prospect of a modest professorship at the University of my native land and the meagre livelihood this would give me.

In England, where a man in his early thirties is, so to speak, still in the first stage of his life, and energy is only just beginning to swell the sails of his bark, my longing for rest was often misunderstood and disapproved of. In London I met a gentleman of sixty who wanted to learn Persian and start a career in India; and I was going to stop my practical career at the age of thirty-two! The difference seems enormous, but in the foggy North man's constitution is much tougher and

harder than in the South. My physical condition, my previous sufferings and privations, may to some extent account for my despondency ; I had to give in, although my object was only half gained.

Emotions of this kind overpowered me even in the whirl and rush of the first months of my stay in London. Before long I had seen through the deceptive glamour of all the brilliancy around me ; and as I very soon realised that my personal acquaintance with high society and the most influential and powerful persons would hardly help me to a position in England, I endeavoured at least to use the present situation as a step towards a position at home, in the hope that the recognition I had obtained in England would be of service to me in my native land, where the appreciation of foreign lands is always a good recommendation. First of all I set to work upon my book of travels, an occupation which took me scarcely three months to accomplish, and which, written with the experiences all yet fresh in my mind, resolved itself chiefly into a dry and unadorned enumeration of adventures and facts. The introduction of historical and philological notes would have been impossible in any case, as my Oriental MSS. were detained in Pest as security on the money loan, and also because in England everything that does not actually bear upon political, economical, or commercial interests is looked upon as superfluous ballast. When the

first proof-sheets appeared of my *Travels in Central Asia* many of my friends regretted the brevity and conciseness of the composition, but the style was generally approved of, and after its publication the various criticisms and discussions of the work eulogised me to such an extent, that my easily roused vanity would soon have got the better of me, had I not been aware of the fact that all this praise was to a great extent an expression of the hospitality which England as a nation feels it its duty to pay to literary foreigners. This, my literary firstfruits, necessarily contributed a good deal to increase my popularity, and enlarged the circle of my acquaintance in high society to which I had been semi-officially introduced by my Asiatic friends. My fame now spread to all scientific, industrial, and commercial circles all over England. I had no time to breathe. The post brought me double as many invitations as before; I was literally besieged by autograph hunters and photographers; and it is no exaggeration to say that for months together I had invitations for every meal of the day, and that my engagements were arranged for, days and weeks beforehand.

Wearisome and expensive as this enjoyment of popularity was—for in my outward appearance and bearing I could not neglect any of the prescribed forms which mark the “distinguished foreigner”—my position afforded me the opportunity of studying London society, and through it the aims and



objects of the highest representatives of Western culture, in a manner which might otherwise not have come within my reach. When in my youth I journeyed Westward I never went beyond the frontiers of Austria, and it was always only in literary pursuits that I came in contact with Western lands : hence I never saw any but the theoretical side of things. And now I was transplanted from the depths of Asia, *i.e.*, from the extreme end of old-world culture and gross barbarism into the extreme of Western civilisation and modern culture ; and overpowering as was the impression of all that I saw and experienced, equally interesting to me was the comparison of the two stages of human progress.

What surprised me more than anything was the wealth, the comfort, and the luxury of the English country houses, compared to which the rich colouring of Oriental splendour—existing as a matter of fact mostly in legends and fairy tales—cuts but a poor figure. As for me, who all my life had only seen the smile of fortune from a distance, I was struck with admiration. Most difficult of all I found it to get used to the elaborate meals and the table pomp of the English aristocracy. I could not help thinking of the time of my Dervishship, when my meals consisted sometimes of begged morsels and sometimes of *pilaw* which I cooked myself. Now I had to eat through an endless series of courses, and drink the queerest mixtures. During this period of

my lionship it was strangest of all to think of the miseries of my childish days and the time when I was a mendicant student. It was the realisation of the fairy tale of the beggar and the prince ; and with reference to this I shall never forget one night which I spent at the magnificent country house of the Duke of A., not far from Richmond. I was guest there together with Lord Clarendon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and other English notabilities. After dinner the company adjourned to the luxuriously furnished smoke-room, and from there shortly before midnight every guest was conducted to his respective bedroom by a lacquey preceding him with two huge silver chandeliers. When the powdered footman dressed in red silk velvet had ushered me into the splendidly furnished bedroom, provided with every possible comfort and luxury, and began to take steps to assist me in undressing, I looked at the man quite dumbfounded and said with a friendly smile, "Thank you, I can manage alone." The footman departed. I feasted my eyes upon all the grandeur around me. It was like a cabinet full of precious curiosities and overflowing with silver articles and wonderful arrangements of all sorts. When I turned back the brocaded coverlet and lay down on the undulating bed, my fancy carried me back twenty years, and I thought of my night quarters in the Three Drums Street at Pest with the widow Schönfeld, where I had hired a bed in company with a tailor's



apprentice, he taking the head and I the foot of the bed. Musing upon the strange alternations of man's lot, and the difference between my condition then and now, I could not go to sleep, but tossed about half the night on my silken couch. It was after all merely a childish reflection, for, though now in splendour, I was but a guest. But it is difficult to divest oneself of the impression of the moment, and as often as I found myself in a similar position the comparison between the mendicant student suffering want and the petted lion of English society has brought me to a contemplative mood.

More even than by the wealth and prosperity I was struck by the spirit of freedom which, notwithstanding the strictly aristocratic etiquette of society, must surprise the South-Eastern European, and more still any one who from the inner Asiatic world finds himself suddenly transplanted to the banks of the Thames. Formerly, in my native land it was always with unconscious awe and admiration that I looked up to a prince, a count, or a baron, and afterwards in Asia I had to approach a Pasha, Khan, or Sirdar with submissive mien, sometimes even with homage. And now I was surprised to notice how little attention was paid to dukes, lords, and baronets in the clubs and other public places in England. When for the first time I went into the reading-room of the Athenæum Club, and with my hat on stood reading the *Times* opposite to Lord

Palmerston and at the same desk with him, I could hardly contain myself for surprise, and my eyes rested more often on the strong features of "Mister Pam" than on the columns of the city paper. Later on I was introduced in the Cosmopolitan Club to the Prince of Wales, then twenty-three years old. This club did not open till after midnight. When I saw the future ruler of Albion sitting there at his ease, without the other members taking the slightest notice of him, I fairly gasped at the apparent indifference shown to the Queen's son. I could but approach the young Prince with the utmost reverence and awe; and it was entirely owing to the great affability and kindness of heart of this son of the Queen that I plucked up courage to sit down and hold half an hour's conversation with him. Since that time this specially English characteristic of individual freedom and independence has often struck me forcibly, and could not fail to strike any one accustomed to the cringing spirit of Asia and the servility of Eastern Europe. Truly a curious mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous, of really noble and frivolous impressions, marked these first months of my sojourn in England. Feelings of admiration and contempt, of delight and scorn alternated within me; and when I ask myself now what it was that I disliked about England, and drove me to unfavourable criticism, I would mention in the first place the rigid society manners, utterly foreign to me, which I found it hard to conform to

and consequently detested. The straitjacket of etiquette and society manners oppresses the English themselves more than they care to acknowledge ; how, then, must it affect the Continental and the wanderer fresh from the Steppes of Asia? The second reason which made the idea of a longer stay in London quite impossible for me was the dislike, nay, the absolute horror I had of the incessant hurrying, rushing, bustling crowds in the thoroughfares ; the desperate efforts to gain honour and riches, and the niggardly grudging of every minute of time. Standing at the corner of Lombard Street or Cheapside, or mixing with the crowds madly hurrying along Ludgate Hill, I felt like a man suddenly transported to pandemonium. To see how these masses push and press past one another, how the omnibus drivers swing round the corners, regardless of danger to human life, for the mere chance of gaining a few coppers more, and to realise how this same struggle for existence goes on in all stages of society, in all phases of life, relentlessly, merciless, was enough to make me think with longing of the indolent life of Eastern lands ; and, without admitting the Nirvana theory, all this fuss and flurry seemed out of place and far too materialistic. My nature altogether revolted against it.

Of course this view was quite erroneous. For what has made England great was, and is, this very same prominent individuality, this restless

striving and struggling, this utter absence of all fear, hesitation, and sentimentality where the realisation of a preconceived idea is concerned. But unfortunately at that time I was still under the ban of Asiaticism; and although the slowness, indolence, and blind fanaticism of the Asiatics had annoyed me, equally disagreeable to me was the exactly opposite tendency here manifested. I wanted to find the "golden middle way," and unconsciously I was drawn towards my own home, where on the borderland between these two worlds I hoped to find what I sought.

And now, after the lapse of so many years, recalling to mind some personal reminiscences of London society, I seem to recognise in the political, scientific, and artistic world of those days so many traits of a truly humane and noble nature, mixed with the most bizarre and eccentric features which have been overlooked by observers.

The gigantic edifice of the British Empire was then still in progress of building, the scaffolding was not yet removed, some portions still awaited their completion; and as the beautiful structure could not yet be viewed in its entirety, and an impression of the whole could, therefore, not be realised, there was in the nation but little of that superabundant self-consciousness for which modern times are noted. They listened to me with pleasure when I spoke of England's mighty influence over the Moslem East, they heard with undisguised gratification when I

commended England's civilising superiority over that of Russia, but yet they did not seem to trust their own eyes, and to many my words were mere polite speeches with which the petted foreigner reciprocated their hospitality. The interest shown by a foreigner in a foreign land must always seem somewhat strange, and my appreciative criticisms of England may have appeared suspicious to many of my readers. Only later statements by such men as Baron Hübner in his *Travels in India*, or Garcin de Tassy's learned disquisitions on the influence of English culture on Hindustan, have lent more weight to my writings.

Of all the leading statesmen of the time I felt most attracted towards Lord Palmerston. I recognised in him a downright Britisher, with a French polish and German thoroughness; a politician who, with his gigantic memory, could command to its smallest details the enormous Department of Foreign Affairs, and who knew all about the lands and the people of Turkey, Persia, and India. He seemed to carry in his head the greater portion of the diplomatic correspondence between the East and the West; and what particularly took my fancy were the jocular remarks which he used to weave into his conversation, together with *bon-mots* and more serious matters. In the after-dinner chats at the house of Mr. Tomlin, not far from the Athenæum Club, or at 16, Belgrave Square with Sir Roderick Murchison, where I was an often invited guest, he

used to be particularly eloquent. When he began to arrange the little knot of his wide, white cravat, and hemmed a little, one could always be sure that some witty remark was on its way, and during the absence of the ladies subjects were touched upon which otherwise were but seldom discussed in the prudish English society of the day. I had to come forward with harem stories and anecdotes of different lands, and the racier they were the more heartily the noble lord laughed. The Prime Minister was at that time already considerably advanced in years. The most delicate questions of the day were freely discussed, and I must confess that it pleased me very much when they did not look upon me as an outsider, but fully took me into their confidence. Lord Granville, afterwards Minister of Foreign Affairs, treated me also with great kindness. He was a little more reserved, certainly, but an intrinsically good man, and it always pleased him when I was at table with him to hear me converse with the different foreign ambassadors in their native tongue. His sister, Mrs. James, an influential lady in high life, provided me with invitations from various quarters, and it was she who urged me to settle in London. Similar encouragements I also received from Sir Justin Sheil, at one time British Ambassador in Persia, and his wife, most distinguished, excellent, people, who instructed me in the ways of fashionable life, and taught me how to dress and how to



comport myself at table, in the drawing-room and in the street. Blunders against the orthodoxy of English customs were resented by many ; and once a lady who had seen me on the top of an omnibus, from where the busy street-life of London can best be observed, said to me in full earnest, " Sir, take care not to be seen there again, otherwise you can no longer appear as a gentleman in society." Admittance into society is everything in England. One is severely judged by the cut and colour of one's clothes. Society ladies demand that hat, umbrella, and walking-stick come from the very best shop, and most important is the club to which one belongs, and of course also the circle of one's acquaintances. When I was able to give as my address, " Athenæum Club, Pall Mall," the barometer of my importance rose considerably.

One can easily understand that all these trifles were little to my taste. I had always been fond of simplicity and natural manners. All these formalities and superficialities were hateful to me, but at that time I had to yield to necessity and make the best of a bad job ; nay, even be grateful to my instructors for their well-meant advice in these matters.

Honestly speaking, I have found among these people some very noble-minded friends who, from purely humane motives, interested themselves in me, and whose kind treatment I shall not forget as long as I live. Amongst these I would especially mention

Lord Strangford, already referred to, a man of brilliant scientific talents, and possessing a quite extraordinary knowledge of geography, history, and the languages of the Moslem East. He had lived for many years on the banks of the Bosphorus as Secretary to the Embassy, and was not only thoroughly acquainted with Osmanli, Persian, and Hindustani, but also with the Chagataic language, then absolutely unknown in Europe. He could recite long passages from the poems of Newai. He was as much at home in the works of Sadi, Firdusi, and Baki as in Milton and Shakespeare, and well informed as regards the ethnography and politics of the Balkan peoples, and the various tribes of Central Asia and India. Lord Strangford, indeed, was to me a living wonder, and when he shook his long-bearded, bony head in speaking of Asia and criticising the politics of Lord Palmerston, I should have liked to note down every word he said, for he was a veritable mine of Oriental knowledge. It is very strange that this man was not used as English Ambassador at one of the Oriental courts, and it has often been laid to Lord Palmerston's charge that he, the illustrious Premier, was not well disposed towards his Irish countryman, who sometimes expressed his resentment of the slight in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Saturday*, or the *Quarterly Review*. As far as I am concerned Lord Strangford was always a most kind and considerate patron, one of the best and most un-



selfish friends I had in England, and his early death was a great grief to me. He died of brain fever, and, as Lady Strangford afterwards wrote to me, holding in his hand the volume of my Chagataic Grammar which I had dedicated to him.

Next to the noble Lord Strangford I would mention the great mathematician, Mr. Spottiswoode, who often asked me to his house ; also Sir Alexander Gordon, in Mayfair, whose sister, knowing something of Egypt, took a special interest in my travels. I was also a welcome guest at Lord Houghton's, both in town at Brook Street and in the country at Ferrybridge, Yorkshire. The lunch parties at his town residence were often of a peculiarly interesting nature. The master of the house, a lover of sharp contrasts, used to gather round his table the fanatical admirer of Mohammedanism, Lord Stanley of Alderley, and the equally fanatical Protestant Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Wilberforce known as "Soapy Sam." Most lively disputes took place at times in defence of the teachings of Christ and Mohammed, in which the disputants did not deal over-gently with one another, and their forcible attacks upon each other's convictions sometimes caused the most ridiculous scenes. Still finer were the meetings at Ferrybridge, Lord Houghton's country seat. During one visit there I made the acquaintance of such celebrities as Lord Lytton, afterwards Viceroy of India ; the poet Algernon Swinburne, who used to read to us passages of his

yet unpublished poem, *Atalanta in Calydon*, over which the slender youth went into ecstasies ; and last, but not least, of Burton, just returned from a mission in the North-West of Africa. Burton—later Sir Richard Burton—was to spend his honeymoon under the hospitable roof of the genial Lord Houghton. The company, amongst which Madame Mohl, the wife of the celebrated Orientalist, Jules Mohl, specially attracted my attention, had met here in honour of Burton, the great traveller, and as he was the last to arrive, Lord Houghton planned the following joke : I was to leave the drawing-room before Burton appeared with his young wife, hide behind one of the doors, and at a given sign recite the first *Sura* of the Koran with correct Moslem modulation. I did as arranged. Burton went through every phase of surprise, and jumping up from his seat exclaimed, “That is Vambéry !” although he had never seen or heard me before. In after years I entertained the most friendly relations with this remarkable man, whom I hold to be, incontestably, the greatest traveller of the nineteenth century, for he had the most intimate knowledge of all Moslemic Asia ; he was a clever Arabic scholar, had explored portions of Africa together with Speke, and gone through the most awful adventures at the court of Dahomey ; he had explored the unknown regions of North and South America, and also made himself a literary name by his translations of the *Lusiade* and *The*

*Thousand and One Nights*; in a word, this strangely gifted man, who was never fully appreciated in his own country, and through his peculiarities laid himself open to much misunderstanding, was from the very first an object of the greatest admiration for me. His contemporary and fellow-worker, Gifford Palgrave, I also reckoned among my friends. He was a classical Englishman, first belonging to the Anglican and afterwards to the Roman Catholic Church. For some time he was in the service of the Society of Jesus, as teacher in the mission school at Beyrût; and as he was quite at home in the Arabic language, he undertook a journey into the then unknown country of Nedjd, the chief resort of the Wahâbis, about whom his book of travels contains many interesting new data. Being a classical orator, he used to fascinate his audience with his choice language, and what Spurgeon has been in the pulpit and Gladstone in Parliament, that was Palgrave in the hall of the Geographical Society. I liked the man fairly well, only a peculiar twinkle of the eye constantly reminded me of his former Jesuitism. In David Livingstone, the great African explorer, I found a congenial fellow-labourer, whose words of appreciation, "What a pity you did not make Africa the scene of your activity!" sounded pleasant in my ears.

Other travellers, such as Speke, Grant, Kirk and others, I was also proud to reckon among

my friends ; and in the field of literature I would mention in the first place Charles Dickens, whose acquaintance I made at the Athenæum Club, and who often asked me to have dinner at the same table with him. Dickens was not particularly talkative, but he was very much interested in my adventures, and when once I declined his invitation for the following evening with the apology that I had to dine at Wimbledon with my publisher, John Murray, he remarked, "So you are going to venture into the 'Brain Castle,' for of course you know," he continued, "that Murray's house is not built of brick but of human brains." Among politicians, artists, actors, financiers, generals—in fact in all classes and ranks of society—I had friends and acquaintances. I had no cause to complain of loneliness or neglect ; any one else would no doubt have been supremely happy in my place, and would have made better use also of the general complaisance. But I was as yet absolutely new to this Western world ; I was as it were still wrapped in the folds of Asiatic thought, and, in spite of my enthusiasm for modern culture, I had great difficulty in making myself familiar with the principal conditions of this phase of life, with its everlasting rushing and hurrying, the unremitting efforts to get higher up, and the cold discretion of the combatants. In fact, my first visit to England made me feel gloomy and discouraged.

This depression was yet enhanced by the disappointment in regard to the material results of my book, and the rude awakening out of my dreams of comparative prosperity. To judge from the enthusiastic reception of my work both in Europe and America, and after all the laudatory criticisms of the Press, I expected to get from the sale of the first edition a sum at least sufficient to ensure my independence. The newspapers talked of quite colossal sums which my publisher had paid or would pay me, and I was consequently not a little crestfallen when at the end of the year I received the first account, according to which I had made a net profit of £500, a sum of which I had spent nearly a third in London. The modest remainder, in the eyes of the former Dervish a small fortune, was as nothing to the European accustomed to London high-life, and not by a long way sufficient for the writer, anxious to make a home for himself. The vision of all my fair anticipations and bold expectations vanished as a mist before my eyes, and after having tasted of the golden fruit of the Hesperides, was I to go back to my scantily furnished table, nay, perhaps be reduced again to poverty and the struggle for daily bread? After twenty years of hard fighting I was back again where I was at the beginning of my career, with this difference, that I had gained a name and reputation, a capital, however, which would not yield its interest till much later.

I am therefore not at all surprised that in my desperate frame of mind I clutched at a straw, and looked upon a professorship at Pest and the doctor's chair of Oriental languages as the bark of salvation upon the still turbulent ocean of my life. True, my cold reception at home had somewhat sobered me, and made the realisation of even this modest ambition not quite so easy of attainment, but my longing for my native land and for a quiet corner admitted of no hesitation, no doubt. With incredible light-heartedness I disengaged myself from the embrace of the noisy, empty homage of the great city on the Thames and sped to Pest to present myself to my compatriots after my triumphal campaign in England and crowned with the laurels of appreciation of the cultured West. As may be supposed, my reception was somewhat warmer but not much more splendid than on my return from Asia. Small nations in the early stages of their cultural development often follow the lead of greater, mightier, and more advanced lands in their distribution of blame or praise. The homely proverb, "Young folks do as old folks did," can also be applied to whole communities, and, especially where it concerns the appreciation and acknowledgment of matters rather beyond the intellectual and national limits of the people, such copying or rather echoing of the superior criticism is quite permissible and excusable. On my return from



England my compatriots received me with marked attention, but Hungary was still an Austrian province, and in order to attain the coveted professorship I had to go to Vienna and solicit the favour of an audience with the Emperor. The Emperor Francis Joseph, a noble-minded monarch and exceptionally kind-hearted—who was not unjustly called the first gentleman of the realm—received me most graciously, asked some particulars about my travels, and at once granted me my request, adding, “You have suffered much and deserve this post.” He made only one objection, viz., that even in Vienna there are but few who devote themselves to the study of Oriental languages, and that in Hungary I should find scarcely any hearers. On my reply; “If I can get no one to listen to me I can learn myself,” the Emperor smiled and graciously dismissed me.

I shall always feel indebted to this noble monarch, although, on the other hand, from the very first I have had much to bear from the Austrian Bureaucracy and the fustiness of the mediæval spirit which ruled the higher circles of Austrian society; perhaps more correctly from their innate ignorance and stupidity. The Lord-High-Steward, Prince A., whom I had to see before the audience, regardless of the recommendations I brought from the Austrian Ambassador in London, received me with a coldness and pride as if I had come to apply for a position as lackey,

and while royal personages of the West, and later on also Napoleon, had shaken hands with me and asked me to sit down, this Austrian aristocrat kept me standing for ten minutes, spoke roughly to me, and dismissed me with the impression that a man of letters is treated with more consideration in Khiva and among the Turkomans than in the Austrian capital.

And this, alas! hurt me all the more, as the social conditions at home in my native land were no better. Here also the wall of partition, class distinctions and religious differences rose like a black, impenetrable screen adorned with loathsome figures before my eyes, and the monster of blind prejudice blocked my way. The enormous distance between the appreciation of literary endeavours in the West and in the East grew in proportion as I left the banks of the Thames and neared my native land; for although the public in Hungary warmly welcomed their countryman, re-echoing the shouts of applause from England and France, nay, even looked upon him with national pride, I could not fail to notice on the part of the heads of society and the leading circles a cold and intentional neglect, which hurt me.

The fact that this Hungarian, who had been so much fêted abroad, was of obscure origin, without family relations, and, moreover, of Jewish extraction, spoiled the interest for many, and they forcibly suppressed any feelings of appreciation



they may have had. The Catholic Church, that hotbed of intolerance and blind prejudice, was the first in attack. It upbraided me for figuring as a Protestant and not as a Catholic, as if I, the freethinker, took any interest in sectarian matters!

I was the first non-Catholic professor appointed according to Imperial Cabinet orders to occupy a chair of the philosophical faculty at the Pest University. Thus not to give offence to this University—unjustly called a Catholic institution—by appointing a so-called Protestant, *i.e.*, a heretic, the title of professor was withheld from me, and for three years I had to content myself with the title of lector and the modest honorarium of 1,000 florins a year—a remuneration equal to that of any respectable nurse in England when besides her monthly wages we take into account her full keep! Truly, from a material point of view, my laborious and perilous travels had not profited me much!

To justify this humiliation certain circles at home took special care to depreciate me at every possible opportunity. Wise and learned men, for instance, professed to have come to the conclusion that my travels in the Far East, and the dangers and fatigues I had professed to have gone through, were a physical impossibility on account of my lame leg. "The Jew lies; he is a swindler, a boaster, like all his fellow-believers." Such were the comments, not merely in words, but actually printed in black and white; and when I introduced myself officially to

the Rector of the University, afterwards Catholic bishop of a diocese, I was greeted with the following gracious words, "Do you suppose we are not fully informed as to the treacherousness of your character? We are well aware that your knowledge of Oriental languages is but very faulty and that your fitness to fill the chair is very doubtful. But we do not wish to act against His Majesty's commands, and to this coercion only do you owe your appointment." Such was the gracious reception I had, and such were the encouraging words addressed to me after the learned Orientalists of Paris and London had loaded me with praise and honour, and after I had accomplished, in the service of my people, a journey which, as regards its perilousness, privations, and sufferings, can certainly not be called a pleasure trip.

As it is only natural that small communities on the lower steps of civilisation are either too lazy or too incapable to think, and are guided in their opinion by the views of the higher and leading ranks of society, I am not surprised that in certain circles of Hungary for years together I was looked upon with suspicion, and that my book of travels, which in the meantime had been translated for several Eastern and Western nations into their mother-tongue, was simply discredited at home. Similar causes have elsewhere, under similar conditions, produced similar effects. When the nick-

name of "Marco Millionì" could be given to the celebrated Venetian who traded all over Asia, why should I mind their treatment of me in Hungary, where, apart from national archæological considerations, nobody evinced any great interest in the distant East? Among the millions of my countrymen there was perhaps no more than one who had ever heard the names of Bokhara and Khiva, and under the extremely primitive cultural conditions of those days geographical explorations were not likely to excite very great interest. The nation, languishing in the bonds of absolutism, and longing for the restoration of Constitutional rights, was only interested in politics; and, since the few scientists, who in their inmost minds were convinced of the importance of my undertaking, had become prejudiced by the reception I had received abroad and were now filled with envy, my position was truly desperate, and for years I had to bear the sad consequences of ill-will. When the first Turkish Consul for Hungary appeared in Budapest he was asked on all sides whether it was really true that I knew Turkish, and when he replied that I spoke and wrote Turkish like a born Osmanli, everybody was greatly surprised. One of my kind friends and patrons said to me in reply to my remark that I should talk Persian with Rawlinson, "You can make us believe this kind of thing, but be careful not to take in other people." A few weeks later Rawlinson took me for a born Persian, but at

home they said it was unheard of for a Hungarian scientist to be able to speak Persian. So deplorably low was the standard of Hungarian learning in those days!

Under these conditions the reader may well be surprised, and I must confess that I am surprised myself now, that my deeply-wounded ambition did not revolt against these saddest of all experiences, but that I meekly bore these constant insults and calumnies. This extraordinary humility in the character of a man who in every fibre of his body was animated by ambition and a desire for fame, as I was in those days, has long been an enigma to me. I have accused myself of lack of courage and determination, and I should blush for shame at the memory of this weakness if it were not for the extenuating circumstance that I was utterly exhausted and wearied with my twenty years' struggle for existence, and that my strong craving for a quiet haven of rest was a further extenuation. What did I care that my supposed merits were not appreciated at home, since in the far advanced West the worth of my labours had been so amply recognised? Why should I trouble myself about the adverse criticism of my rivals and ill-wishers since I had at last found a quiet corner, and in possession of my two modestly furnished rooms could comfort myself with the thought that I had now at last found a home, and with the scanty but certain income of some eighty florins per

month I could sit down in peace to enjoy the long wished-for pursuit of quiet, undisturbed literary labour? When I had completed the furnishing of my humble little home, and, sitting down on the velvet-covered sofa, surveyed the little domain, which now for the first time I could call my own, I experienced a childish delight in examining all the little details which I had provided for my comfort. Thirty-three years long I had spent in this earthly vale of misery, a thousand ills, both physical and mental, to endure, before it was granted me to experience the blissful consciousness, henceforth no longer to be tossed about, the sport of fortune, no longer to be exposed to gnawing uncertainty, but quietly and cheerfully to pursue the object of my life, and by working out my experiences to benefit the world at large. To other mortals, more highly favoured by birth, my genuine satisfaction and delight may appear incomprehensible and ridiculous: one may object that I longed for rest too soon, and that the small results were scarcely worthy of all the hard labour. But he whom Fate has cast about for years on the stormy ocean hails with delight even the smallest and scantiest plot of solid land, and he who has never known riches or abundance enjoys his piece of dry but certain bread as much as the richest dish.

Such were the feelings which animated me when I settled down in surroundings altogether apart from my studies, my desires and views of life, and

such also were the feelings which made me proof against all the attacks and slights of a criticism animated more by ignorance than intentional ill-will. I simply revelled in the enjoyment of these first weeks and months of my new career. The healthy hunger for work acted like a precious tonic, the old indestructible cheerfulness returned, and when after my daily labour of eight or ten hours I went for a walk in the country I fancied myself the happiest man on earth. On account of the marked difference of treatment I had received in England and in Hungary, and in order not to subject myself to unnecessary slights, I had at home avoided all social intercourse as far as I possibly could. Thus on the one hand I had all the more leisure for my work, and on the other hand, through my large correspondence with foreign countries, I was led to remove the centre of gravity of my literary operations and the chief aim and object of my pursuits to foreign lands. At first this necessity troubled me ; but the remark of my noble patron, Baron Eötvös, that Hungary never could be the field of my literary labours, and that I should benefit my native land far more by putting the products of my pen upon the world's market in foreign languages soon comforted me. I wrote mostly in German and English, and enlarged my mind in various branches of practical and theoretical knowledge of Asiatic peoples and countries. Two years had scarcely passed before my pen was the most in



request on subjects of the geographical, ethnographical, philological, scientific, and political literature of Central Asia—in fact, of the whole Moslemic East. During this period I saw the realisation of the boldest ideas of my early days, and only now began to reap the benefit of my studies. I read the different European and Asiatic languages without the help of a dictionary, and as in most of them I had had practical experience, I could understand them the more easily, and also write in them. Gradually I had got together a small library of special books, and on account of the lively correspondence I kept up with my fellow-literati and friends of Oriental study, I was enabled to work with energy far from the centre of my studies as linguist, ethnographer, and editor. Now and then the want of intellectual stimulus and personal intercourse with my fellow-labourers made itself felt. I longed particularly for an interchange of ideas with authorities on the East, as in Pest itself I could only meet with a few orthodox scholars of Ural-Altaic comparative philology; but in the zeal and enthusiasm for one's undertaking one easily dispenses with encouragement, and with the device, "*Nulla dies sine linea*," which I always conscientiously followed, I must ultimately reach the goal and overcome all obstacles.

With industry and perseverance, energy and untiring zeal, I could conquer anything except the stupidity of human nature galled by envy. The

more I worked to keep up my literary repute and the repute I had gained as traveller, the more furiously raged my opponents, and the more they endeavoured to discredit me, and to accuse me of all imaginable mistakes and misrepresentations. Once when I complained about this to Baron Eötvös, this noble and high-minded man rightly remarked, "The regions of your travels and studies are unknown in this land, and you cannot expect society to acknowledge its ignorance and incapacity to understand. It is far easier and more comfortable to condemn one whom it does not understand as a liar and a deceiver." Now this was exactly my position ; all the same it grieved me to meet with so much opposition on every side. Not in any period of my life, when some public acknowledgment on the part of the Academy or of the newly-established Hungarian Government would have been such a help to one of my almost childish sensitiveness, had I ever received the slightest token of appreciation of my labours. Twelve years after my return from Central Asia I was elected ordinary member of the Academy, and then only after several quite insignificant men had preceded me, and I simply could not be passed over any longer. Others of higher birth, but without any literary pretensions, were made honorary members or even placed on the directing staff. As regards the State's want of appreciation of my work, although I may now look upon it as of no significance, it made me feel very



sore at the time, especially during the Coronation festivities when Hungarian literati and artists were picked out and I was utterly ignored. At other times they were glad enough to distinguish me as the only Magyar who had brought Hungarian knowledge on to the world's stage, and had been instrumental in making the name of the Hungarian Academy known to the Western world. I could give many other proofs of this intentional neglect and ignoring of my claims, but why should I weary the reader any longer with revelations of wounded vanity? The conviction that I had become a stranger in my own land impressed itself more and more upon me ; the false position in which I was placed must necessarily become more and more conspicuous. No wonder, then, that I grew indifferent towards the place which formerly had been the object of all my desires, and I now began to long for England, the foreign land where I was better understood and more appreciated, and where I had found more interest in my studies and more encouragement of my efforts.

Nothing, therefore, was more natural than that in these circumstances I should undertake a journey abroad, to cheer and comfort myself by personal contact with congenial society. These motives drew me towards Germany, France, and particularly England. In Germany I made the acquaintance of distinguished Orientalists whose theoretical knowledge excited my admiration as much as their

practical incapacity and awkwardness surprised me. They were kind, modest, worthy men, who, since I was outside their particular set, met me very pleasantly, but they looked very doubtful when I seemed not to be acquainted with their theories or betrayed an insufficient knowledge of their treatises, notes, and glossaries. They listened to me, but I saw at once that they looked upon me as a dilettante, outside the pale of learning. This opinion of my literary accomplishments was not altogether unjust, for I was and remained always a practical Orientalist, and these theorists might have remembered that a mere bookman could not possibly have travelled through so many Islamic lands as Dervish and faced all dangers and vicissitudes in close intercourse with the people.

In France I fared somewhat better. Here the political situation had revealed the necessity of practical knowledge of Asiatic conditions, and side by side with the theoretical guardians of Oriental science there had at all times been a considerable number of practical authorities on Asia, who now received me very warmly. Of the personages with whom I became acquainted in Paris I will mention in the first place Napoleon III., who admitted me to an audience more because it was the fashion than to satisfy his scientific curiosity. When I entered the Tuileries in company with Prince Metternich, then Austrian Ambassador at Paris, and caught sight of the Emperor before the Pavillon de l'Horloge

as he was taking leave of Queen Christina of Spain, the vision of this thick-set man, with his flabby features and pale, faded eyes, made a miserable impression upon me. And still more lamentable was the result of my half-hour's interview with him. He appeared to have been preparing himself for my visit, for on his writing-table, covered with papers and documents, I saw spread out the map which accompanied the English edition of my *Travels*, and, after the usual ceremonies, he told me to sit down by him and began to converse about Hungary. When I remarked that I had undertaken these travels into the interior of Asia at the request of the Academy, the Emperor replied he had heard a good deal in praise of Hungary, and after receiving some information as to the intellectual efforts of Hungary, he led the conversation on to Central Asia. At first he attempted to give the conversation a more scientific character, and, with reference to his *Jules César*, which had just appeared, he began to talk about the ethnical origin of the Parthians. Gradually he dropped into a consideration of the political condition of Central Asia, and put to me the question whether in the Memorandum I had presented to Lord Palmerston I had touched upon the politico-economic relations between Central Asia and India, and wherein lay the danger for England. My explanations did not seem to suit his preconceived notions, for he tried to refute my views as regards the danger to English

interests by pointing out the strong position England held in India, so gloriously maintained in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, while Russia was only just beginning to make conquests in Central Asia. When I replied that Russia's object was not so much to conquer India, but rather to cripple the English military forces, in order to tie the hands of one of the chief opponents of Russia's designs upon Constantinople, the Emperor was driven into a corner and said: "Such an eventuality is a long way off yet, and as to this point in the Oriental question, there are yet other factors to be considered." Leaving the discussion of politics, which did not seem to please the Emperor, he suddenly turned the conversation again upon my travels, and began to compliment me on my adventures and the linguistic proficiency which had so helped me to success. He said, "You have evidently a great talent for acting, and the fact that you, with your physical weakness (hinting at my lameness), have been able to go through so many fatigues, is altogether astonishing."

I had occasion later on to meet the Emperor in the salon of the Princess Mathilde, but I must honestly say that I could not discern a trace of that greatness of which for years I had heard so much. He could be affable and pleasant; between taciturnity and gravity he simulated the deep thinker, but his pale eyes and artificial speech soon betrayed the adventurer who had been

elevated to his exalted position by the inheritance of a great name and the wantonness of the nation. His minister, Count Drouyn de Lhuys, was somewhat more inquisitive and better informed ; but the most interesting personality of my Parisian acquaintance was decidedly the great Guizot, to whom I was introduced in the Rue de Bac at the salon of Madame Mohl. The old gentleman, then in his 78th year, was full of sparkling humour, and his memory was quite marvellous. He seemed to be most amused to hear me hold a lively conversation in various European and Asiatic languages, and he made a point of bringing me in contact with several more nationalities with the object of confusing me. Monsieur Guizot took a warm interest in me ; at his suggestion I was invited to the various salons, but all these civilities could not chain me to the Parisian world. In the leading themes, *belle lettres*, music, and plastic art, I was an *ignoramus* and had not a word to say ; the superfine manners of society worried me, for I missed here the lively interest in things Asiatic which in the London circles, in spite of the no less strict etiquette, was constantly evinced. Men such as Barthélemy de St. Hilaire, Garcin de Tassy, Pavet de Courteille, and other experts, had a strong fascination for me, but generally speaking France left me cold, for I missed even the great cosmopolitan ideas, the lively interest in the movements of mankind in the far-away corners of the globe, and I realised that national

vanity would not so easily admit a stranger to its platform.

On the other side of the Channel it was quite different, and in course of time the oftener I came to England the more I felt at home there, and the closer became the ties of friendship in various classes of society. When in London I was often invited to the provincial towns to give public lectures on some one or other subject of Inner-Asiatic conditions, and thus became acquainted with the principal centres of industry. My lectures were mostly limited to the description of those Central Asiatic lands where I had resided for some considerable time, and dealt with commerce, industry, natural products, and other such practical points. In many places, as, for instance, in Birmingham, I was asked to bring my costume bought in Central Asia, to give the manufacturers an insight into the colour, material, and fashion of the national costume, and, as I learned afterwards, similar goods of English manufacture have since been imported into Bokhara by the way of Afghanistan. In other places again, I had to speak of my travelling adventures in connection with geographical and ethnographical interests, and even in the smallest towns I always found an attentive and interested audience. I also used to touch upon the political side of my travelling experiences, and the more I railed against Russia the louder was the applause. Sometimes there were comical episodes during my lectures.



After I had finished, the public always addressed various questions to me, and once the learned entomologist, Mr. D., asked whether I could not oblige him with some Central Asiatic lice, as he had made a special study of these insects, and was on the point of publishing a large book on the subject. On my reply that in Central Asia I had been in quite too close contact with these creatures, but that now, thank Heaven, there was a great distance between us, the scientist asked whether, perhaps, my Tartar could oblige him with a few specimens. He explained that he had various kinds, Chinese, Siamese, and other lice, but he had not been able to procure any from Central Asia. Again, I had to reply in the negative, but the enthusiastic entomologist would not yet give in. "Could not," he suggested, "a European louse (a Hungarian one in this case) be brought into contact with my Tartar? it would be interesting to note what transformation would take place." Needless to say, I did not perform this charitable duty to science, but this little episode with Mr. D., who soon afterwards published a work in two thick volumes upon *pedicula*, has often amused me. My lectures in England have always had an exhilarating effect upon me. Commencing in 1868, I visited in this manner, with short intervals, many different towns of the United Kingdom. Bath, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Leamington, Norwich, Kendal, York, Wakefield, Edinburgh,



Belfast, Halifax, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Brighton, Cardiff, and other places, were visited once, twice, and even oftener. Everywhere I enjoyed the hospitality of the most distinguished and richest inhabitants of the place, and thus I got an insight into the social, religious, ethical, and political standing as well as the prevailing ideas and notions of the British people which increased my admiration and enthusiasm for this remarkable nation. After two years of uninterrupted sojourn in Hungary I always felt the need for what the French call, "*me retremper dans l'esprit européen*," and to strengthen my nerves and refresh my ideas by a trip to England. Just as on my journey home from the East I felt that step by step I was advancing in Western ways of living and thinking, in Western manners and customs, until they reached their culminating point in England, so also when returning home from thence I felt that each step was bringing me nearer to Eastern notions of life, and to the errors, abuses, and superstitions of the Old World. Year after year I made the same disappointing observation. It always struck me in the same unpleasant manner ; and if in spite of all this I did not follow the promptings of my heart to make my permanent home in the centre of Western thought and culture, so much more congenial to my own conceptions of life, the fault lies not with me, but with various external causes. In the first place the immediate contact with these factors of

Western culture, the incessant buzzing and whirring of the machinery, had a stunning and exhausting effect upon me. I realised that this restlessness, this everlasting mad rushing and wrestling was unavoidable and indispensable to the attainment of the object in view, but I preferred to watch the grotesque spectacle from a distance, and to renew my strength by occasional visits to the field of action. In the second place, notwithstanding all the many contradictions and oppositions in which I constantly found myself with my countrymen on account of my different views and notions of life, I clung far too strongly to the soil of my native land to separate myself from it altogether, and finally break with so many homely manners and customs yet dear to me. And in the third place I was a Hungarian and had presented myself to the world as the explorer of the early history and language of my people. As such, an expatriation might reasonably have shed a doubtful light upon my character as man and writer. My fate compelled me to remain at home, to persevere, and to make myself as comfortable as I could in the uncongenial surroundings. A hard struggle, an everlasting self-denial, a constant incognito seemed to be my appointed lot both in Europe and in Asia. Here, as there, my surroundings were foreign and uncongenial to me, and while for many years I accommodated myself to the necessity, and silently bore all manner of mental injuries, I had always

the consolation of work ; for in literary occupation I forgot everything else and was supremely happy.

I have often been asked why I did not from a patriotic point of view join the national political endeavours, and take part in the movement of 1867? From a utilitarian point of view, and considering my eminently practical views of life, my entering the Hungarian Parliament seemed to commend itself ; but serious considerations held me back. In the first place I had no taste for this career. I had never studied Hungarian law, and my knowledge of the political and economical conditions of the land were far too slight for me to occupy a position as practical Hungarian politician worthy of my ambition. And secondly, if these difficulties could have been overcome, there were yet many other obstacles in the way, which made a successful career such as I desired, practically impossible. In Hungary, and elsewhere on the European Continent, birth and origin play an important part in public life. The saying, "*Boni viri vinique non quæritur origo*," is and always will be only a figure of speech ; and although, perhaps, the strong spirit of liberalism which marked the commencement of Hungary's constitutional era might have favoured my ambition—which I doubt, as so far not a single citizen of Jewish extraction has succeeded in becoming a leading statesman—it was not very likely that the highest circles of

Vienna society would brook a breach of their old conservative notions. I was bound to reckon with this circumstance, and as my ambition could tolerate no half measures and limitations, I preferred to keep altogether aloof from the political arena of Hungary.



My Political Career and Position in  
England





## CHAPTER VIII

### MY POLITICAL CAREER AND POSITION IN ENGLAND

MANY people have wondered how the various professions of Orientalist, ethnographer, philologist, and political writer could all be united in one and the same person, and that I applied myself to all these literary pursuits has often been made a matter of reproach. Personally, I cannot see either virtue or advantage in this odd mixture of study, but I have gone on with it for years, and I will now shortly mention the reasons which induced me thereto. I have already related how, during my first stay in Constantinople, I became a Press correspondent, and how, through constant intercourse with the political world, I entered the list of writing politicians. My interest in political affairs has never flagged; indeed, it rose and became more active when, on account of my personal experiences in Persia and Central Asia, I became, so to speak, the authority for all such information concerning them as related to the political questions of the day, and

of which even initiated politicians were ignorant. The traveller who keeps his eyes open necessarily takes a practical view of all that goes on in social, political, and intellectual life, and it is perfectly impossible that the wanderer, entirely dependent upon his own resources for years together, and mixing with all classes and ranks of society, should cultivate merely theoretical pursuits. To me the various languages were not merely an object, but also a means, and when one has become practically so familiar with foreign idioms in letter and in speech that one feels almost like a native, one must always retain a lively interest in their respective lands and nations, one shares their weal and woe, and will always feel at home among them. Of course, it is quite another thing for the theoretical traveller, whose object is of a purely philological or archæological nature. To him land and people are secondary matters, and when he has procured the desired theoretical information, and left the scene of operation, he forgets it all the sooner, since he has always remained a stranger to his surroundings, and has always been treated as such.

This could never be the case with me. I had so familiarised myself with Osmanli, Persian, and East Turkish that I was everywhere taken for a native. In those three languages my pen has always been busy up to an advanced age, and I believe there is hardly another European who has kept up such

varied correspondence with Orientalists in distant lands.

When, on my return from Asia, I took part in the discussion of the political questions of the day, and, as eye-witness of current events, was questioned by the leading statesmen of the day, I could not with the best will in the world have escaped entering upon a political career. Lord Palmerston gave me the first incentive by requesting me, through Sir Roderick Murchison, then President of the London Geographical Society, to draw up a memorandum. I did as I was asked, and handed in my report about the position of Russia on the Yaxartes, and the state of political affairs in Central Asia, with the necessary digressions into the regions of Persian and Turkish politics. All this was easy enough to me, for at the Porte I had been an eye-witness of the political movements. I had already been actively employed as political correspondent, and both in Teheran and in Constantinople I had constantly been in contact with the diplomatic circles. During the many interviews which Lord Palmerston granted me, he always took all my remarks jokingly, and never appeared the serious diplomatist. He told me that I looked at things through the spectacles of anti-Russian patriotic Magyarism, that Hungarians and Poles were hot-brained, and that the Thames would discharge a good deal more water before the Cossacks watered their horses at the Oxus. When,

a few months after my arrival in London, the news came of the taking of Tashkend by Chernayeff, and soon after the celebrated Note of Gorchakoff was presented at Downing Street, the jocular character of the English Premier toned down somewhat. In influential political circles I was questioned more frequently about the defensive strength of the Emir of Bokhara, about the highroads, and the public opinion of the Central Asiatics. But even then Lord Palmerston, always cheerful in spite of his advanced age, would not allow his real motives to transpire. He feigned an Olympic quietness or an icy indifference, and the only sign of interest he showed me was his encouragement to continue writing my letters to the *Times*, and to enlighten the English public concerning the land and the people of Central Asia.

But the press and the public in England behaved quite differently. The great majority, of course, was optimistic. The terror of the Afghan Campaign in 1842 still filled all hearts with dismay, and after the unsuccessful termination of the Crimean War they easily drifted into the Ostrich policy, said that the advance of Russia towards the frontiers of India was a chimera, and laughed at my firm and consistent assertions that there was danger threatening from the side of Russia. If I were now to publish all the newspaper articles, essays, and parliamentary speeches which appeared at the time to contradict my views, and to pacify the public in England and

India, it would display indeed a sad picture of self-deception and a wilful lulling to sleep in fancied security. On my side were only a few staunch Conservatives, since this party, decidedly anti-Russian, had stood out for an energetic policy ; but personally I took no notice either of the indifference of the masses or of the scorn and mockery of the optimists. The more they laughed at my ideas the more fervently and zealously did I defend them. I spared neither time nor trouble to bring forward the most striking proofs. I kept up my relations with Central Asia and Persia by constant correspondence. I read the Russian papers industriously, and so I had always an important weapon of defence at hand. The columns of the *Times* and the fashionable monthly and weekly periodicals were open to me, and I had little difficulty in displaying such activity in writing as would impress even my political opponents, and finally break down the indifference of the great reading public. Many looked upon me as a Magyar thirsting for revenge on Russia, others again were pleased to find in me, a foreigner, a zealous defender of British State interests ; and this caused the more surprise, as such concern for foreign State interests is always a rarity, and in England, much envied and little beloved on the Continent, had never been heard of before. Had I been seeking to obtain a public appointment in England, and had I settled there, no doubt my efforts would have appeared in quite

another light, and the attention and subsequent acclamation I received would doubtless have been pitched in a lower key. But since, in my humble function of professor, I abode in Hungary, and as a foreigner continued in a foreign land, without ostentation or hope of material preferment, to carry on the defence of British interests on the Continent of Europe, and even persevered in influencing public opinion in England itself, I succeeded in banishing all suspicion of self-interest, and finally in disarming even the bitterest political opponents. Amongst the few who particularly disliked my political energy was Mr. Gladstone, the zealous advocate of an Anglo-Russian alliance in Church and politics. And yet I have been told that he had remarked to a friend, "Professor Vambéry's agitation seemed at first suspicious to me, but since I have heard that he is a poor man I believe in his fanaticism." The insular separatist, the proud Englishman, had in the end to submit to a foreigner mixing himself up with his national concerns, giving his unbidden opinion about Great Britain's foreign policy, and finally, by dint of perseverance, influencing public opinion in England.

Of course all this was not the work of a few weeks or months, but of a whole series of years. Between 1865 and 1885 I published a quantity of letters, articles, and essays on political and politico-economic affairs in Central Asia, Persia,



and Turkey in English, German, French, Hungarian, and American periodicals, which, if collected, would make several volumes. In England it was chiefly in the *Times*, and sometimes in other daily papers, as also in periodicals such as the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly Review*, the *National Review*, *Army and Navy Gazette*, the *New Review*, the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, the *Leisure Hour*, and *Good Words*. In Germany I wrote in the *Münchener* (formerly *Augsburger*) *Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Unsere Zeit*, *Die Deutsche Rundschau*, *Die Deutsche Revue*, *Welthandel*, and in a few other daily and monthly papers, long since discontinued. In Austro-Hungary I often wrote in the *Pester Lloyd*, but only seldom in the *Neue Freie Presse* and in the *Monatschrift für den Orient*, while in France I contributed to the *Revue des deux Mondes*, and in America to the *Forum* and the *North American Review*. Only when the Central Asiatic question became acute—as, for instance, on the occasion of the taking of Samarkand in 1868, the campaign against Khiva in 1873, the conquest of Khokand in 1876, and the Pendjeh affair—was my pen in actual request. For the rest I had to force myself upon the public, and not only on the Continent, but in England also, I often had difficulty in getting a hearing. As long as the Russians had not so far consolidated their power that it was dangerous for foreign travellers to be admitted in the conquered



districts I was able to maintain myself as chief and only authority on Central Asiatic affairs. Later I had gradually to relinquish this privilege. The number of writers versed in Central Asiatic concerns constantly increased, but my knowledge of the Oriental and Russian languages, and also my prolonged and intimate acquaintance with the theme, always gave me a certain amount of advantage over my literary competitors. From time to time, when the Central Asiatic question came to the foreground, I entered the arena with larger, more substantial essays. Thus, for instance, my *Power of Russia in Asia*, which appeared in German and Hungarian, depicted the gradual progress of the Russian conquests in Asia. As foundation for my article I used MacNeil's *The Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East*, which appeared at the time of the Crimean War. This I elaborated with new facts and data. Like my predecessor, I preached then (1871) to deaf ears. People troubled themselves very little about Russia's Asiatic politics. They called me a blinded Russophobe, and now—since the Northern Colossus has thrown his polyp-like arm over the half of Asia, and is looked upon as the peace-breaker of the Western world—when I remember the scornful laughter of the great politicians, I cannot help thinking what a pity it was that timely precautions were not taken to ward off the coming danger, and that people did not realise that the power gained in Asia might one

day stand Russia in good stead in its dealings with Europe.

The second independent book about political matters which I brought out was entitled, *Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Frontier Question*, published in English and German. It was, correctly speaking, a collection of my different political articles published in various periodicals. This book, coming out at the time of the Khiva campaign, when people showed a much keener interest in what took place in the inner Asiatic world, found a good sale, and although not of much material advantage to me, gave me a good deal of moral encouragement.

Of great effect was my article about *The Coming Struggle for India*, published in 1885, at the time when the question of the rivalry between the two Colossi in Asia had reached a seething-point, and after the affair at Pendjdeh nearly involved England and Russia in a war. This booklet, which I wrote in twenty days, and issued simultaneously in English, French, German, Swedish, and Guzerati (East Indian language), caused a great sensation far beyond its intrinsic worth. It proved also a lucrative speculation.

*The Coming Struggle for India*, which was the English title of the book, brought me quite a stream of commendatory grateful letters from England, America, and Australia; I was eulogised as a prophet, and held up as an English patriot whose merits would never be forgotten nor too

highly thought of in Albion. On this occasion I also received some less flattering communications from English Socialists and Anarchists, who in the first place reproached me with interfering in the affairs of their country, and in the second place endeavoured to prove how unjust and inhuman it was for England to waste life and money on the civilising and conquest of foreign nations, while at home hundreds of thousands of their compatriots were perishing of poverty and distress. The colonial policy enriches the aristocrats who revel in luxury, while the labourer, oppressed by the capitalist, is left to starve. Thus complained one of my unbidden correspondents.

The middle classes and the aristocracy of England thought differently, however. Regardless of all scornful and derisive remarks I had now for twenty years pursued my political campaign with unremitting zeal, and had always had the interest of England at heart. Many, therefore, looked upon me as a true friend, and although I was stamped by some as a fanatic, an Anglomaniac, or even a fool, the majority saw in me a writer who honestly deserved the respect and recognition of the country ; a man who in spite of his foreign extraction should be honoured as a promoter of Great Britain's might and power. Cold, proud, and reserved as the Britisher generally appears before strangers, I must confess that at my public appearances both in London and in the provinces I have always

been received with the utmost cordiality and warmth.

Many were struck with the pro-English spirit of my writings, and I have frequently been asked how it was that I, far from the scene of action, was often more quickly and better informed about current events than the English Government which had Embassies and secret agencies at its disposal. The reason is clear enough. In the first place I had personal experiences at my disposal, and, supported by my correspondents in the Far East, many of my views have thus in course of time been justified by events. Secondly, I had paid far greater attention to the communications of the Russian press than the politicians in England, where the Russian language was not much known yet. I was surprised myself to find that my political activity was even discussed in the English Parliament and led to interpellations. On the 22nd of May, 1870, Mr. Eastwick asked the Government: "Whether there was any truth in the rumours, mentioned in Mr. Vambéry's letter published in the *Times* on the 18th of this month, that Herat had been taken by Yakub Khan?" Lord Enfield, then Secretary of State, denied my statement; nevertheless I was right, for Herat was actually in the hands of the rebel son of Shir Ali Khan. On the 3rd of June, 1875, Mr. Hanbury asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Whether his (the minister's) attention had been called to a letter of Mr. Vambéry's in the *Times* of the 2nd of

June relating to a new Russian expedition to hitherto unknown districts of the Upper Oxus ; whether the purpose of the expedition had been communicated to the English Government, and whether, as stated by Mr. Vambéry, the diplomatist, Mr. Weinberg, was a member of the expedition, and whether it was of a political as well as of a scientific character ? ” To this Mr. Bourke, then Secretary of State, replied in Parliament : “ That he had read Mr. Vambéry’s letter with great interest, but that Government had not yet received any information regarding the matter therein mentioned.” Again I was on the right side and had the priority in point of information ; thus naturally the weight of my writings continually increased.

Without desiring or seeking it I was acknowledged in England as the Asiatic politician and the staunch friend of the realm. Year after year I received invitations to give lectures about the present and the future condition of England in Asia, and when, tired of writing, I longed for a little change and recreation, I travelled to England, where in various towns—London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bradford, Sheffield, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c.—I gave lectures for a modest honorarium. On these occasions I drew the attention of the public to their commercial and political interests in the Orient, and urged them to exercise their civilising influence over Asia. Foreigners who for years together concern them-

selves about the weal or woe of a land not their own belong certainly to the rarities, and consequently I was received everywhere in England with open arms and made much of by all classes of society.

This was very patent during the critical time in the spring of 1885, and the ovations I received in London and other towns of the United Kingdom I shall never forget. On the 2nd of May I gave a lecture in the great hall of Exeter Hall about the importance of Herat. On my arrival I found the house full to overflowing with a very select audience. Lord Houghton, who presided at this meeting, thanked me in the name of the nation, and the next day almost all the newspapers had leading articles about the services I had rendered, and the resoluteness with which I always met the woeful optimism and blunders of leading politicians led astray by party spirit.

A few days later I spoke under the auspices of the Constitutional Union, before an aristocratic Conservative gathering in Willis's Rooms, on the subject, "England and Russia in Afghanistan, or who shall be lord and master in Asia?" The heads of English aristocracy were present, and when on the platform behind me I recognised a duke, many lords, marshals, generals, ex-ministers, and several famous politicians and writers of Great Britain I was really overcome.

My thoughts wandered back into the past. I



remembered the chill autumn night, which I, a beggar, spent under the seat on the promenade at Presburg. I thought of the scorn, the contempt, and the misery to which I had been exposed as the little Jew boy and the hungry student, and comparing the miserable past with the brilliant present, I could not help marvelling at the strange dispensations of fate. Modesty forbids me to speak of the manner in which Lord Hamilton, Lord Napier of Magdala, Lord Cranbrook, and others expressed themselves both before and after my lecture about my person and my work, but I repeat it, my modesty is not the feigned, hateful modesty of the craft. Suffice it to say that I had the satisfaction of warning the proud English aristocracy against the sinful optimism of the Liberals then in power. If this episode stands out as the crowning point of my political labours it also shows the magnanimity and noble-mindedness of the Englishman (so often condemned for his insular pride) where it concerns the impartial acknowledgment of merit and the interests of his fatherland!

In the zeal with which I had taken up the political questions of England all these points did not present themselves to me till afterwards. There was one incident with regard to this matter which deserves mention. When, after the conclusion of the last Afghan War, 1880, the Liberal party came into power, they did all they could to upset the politics of their opponents, and decided to give back



to the Afghans the important frontier station, Kandahar. I then addressed an open letter to Lord Lytton, at that time Viceroy of India, in which I warned him against this step, and pointed out the danger which would ensue. This letter was reproduced by the whole Press, and a few days after I read in the German papers the following despatch :

“LONDON, 22nd February.

“An important meeting being held to-day in favour of the continuance of the occupation of Kandahar, a letter of Vambéry's to Lytton has come very opportunely. It is therein stated that to give up Kandahar would do irreparable damage to England's prestige in Asia, for the Asiatics could look upon it only as a sign of weakness. Vambéry further asserts that the occupation of Kandahar under safe conditions would decidedly not show a deficit, but, on the contrary, be profitable to India, for the Kandaharis are the best traders of all Central Asia. Finally, Vambéry points out that the Russians, even without the occupation of Merv, would within a few years stand before the gates of Kandahar.”

Lord Lytton himself wrote to me as follows about this matter :—

“KNEBWORTH PARK,

“STEVENAGE, HERTS,

“February 22, 1885.

“DEAR PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY, — “I am very much obliged to you for your interesting and

valuable letter about Kandahar, and you have increased my obligation by your permission to publish it, of which I have availed myself. I little thought, when I had the honour of making your acquaintance many years ago at Lord Houghton's [*see* p. 255], that I should live to need and receive your valued aid in endeavouring to save England's Empire in the East from the only form of death against which not even the gods themselves can guard their favourites—death by suicide. I fear, however, that its present guardians, who have Moses and the prophets, are not likely to be converted—even by one of the dead. At least, the only form of conversion to which they seem disposed, is one which threatens to reverse the boast of Themistocles by converting a great Power into a little one.

“Believe me, dear Professor Vambéry,

“Very sincerely yours,

“LYTTON.”

In non-English Europe great statesmen seldom or never condescend to write in such terms to mere journalists! And where such encouragements, characteristic of a free nation, are bestowed on the ambitious writer, they urge him on with still greater enthusiasm. And, further, what must be the feelings of the writer who knows all about England's glorious doings in Asia, and from his earliest youth has dreamed of political freedom; who, hampered

hitherto by the mediæval prejudices still prevalent in Austria, finds himself all at once able to move and act without restraint, and has not to be ashamed of his low birth? One may say what one likes against the English (and they have no doubt some very glaring faults), but this one thing must be allowed—before all things they are men, and only after that are they British. In the enlightened nineteenth century they have made more progress than any, and a part such as that played by Disraeli and others would be perfectly impossible not only in Germany and Austro-Hungary—still more or less imbued with the spirit of mediævalism—but even in liberty-boasting France. And I further ask who could possibly remain indifferent while keenly watching the *rôle* played on the world's stage by this small group of islands, how it rules over several hundred millions of people of all colours, tongues, and religions, and educates them up to better things!

This extraordinary and almost phenomenal energy must surely excite the admiration of any thinking man interested in the history of humanity. When even Rome in the zenith of its glory impresses us with the magnitude of its power, how could the actions and operations of Albion, so infinitely greater, mightier and more impressive, leave us indifferent? These and similar ideas from the very first attracted me towards England; I felt interested in all her doings, and when it came to the question

of the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia, I naturally always took the side of England. Besides, could I, or dare I, have acted differently considering the outrageous interference of Russia in the Hungarian struggle for independence in 1848, and also mindful of the fact that the government of the Czar, that frightful instrument of tyranny, that pool of all imaginable slander and abuse, that disgrace to humanity, must on no account be strengthened and supported in its thirst for conquest? In proportion as the dominion of the Czar grows in Asia, so do his means increase for checking the liberty of Europe, and the easier will it be for Russia to perform acts of benevolence and friendship towards those of our sovereigns who long for absolutism. England's greatness can never damage, but rather profit us; as the worthy torch-bearer of nineteenth-century culture no liberal-minded man will follow her successful operations in Asia with envious eyes.

And so my literary activity was a thorn in the eyes of the cunning Muscovites, and the ways and means they used to counteract it are not without interest. One day in Pest I received a visit from a well-known Russian statesman, who introduced himself to me with the following remark, "When the great Greek General fled to Persia, he presented himself before Cyrus the greatest enemy of the Greeks. I have come to Hungary to pay my respects to you." Of course I received him

as pleasantly as possible, and when the wily diplomatist looked round my poor abode he remarked with a smile, "You work a great deal, and yet you do not appear to be very well off. *You would probably be in better circumstances if you did not work so much.*" I replied, also with a smile, that I had accustomed myself to a Dervish life in Asia, that it suited me admirably both morally and physically, and that with reference to the intellectual result, I felt no desire or need to make any change. "Just so," remarked the Muscovite, looking me straight in the face, and soon turned the conversation on to other subjects. Various other attempts were made to turn me aside from the path I pursued and to discredit me in the eyes of England and of the Continent. But their trouble was all in vain, for the bitter hostility of a despotic Government and their venomous darts must remain without effect against the expressed approval of a free nation and the approbation of the whole liberal West.

In the spring of 1885, during my stay in London, I received invitations to various other towns. A war between England and Russia was then pending in consequence of the Pendjeh affair. The number of letters and telegrams I daily received became so numerous, that I could only master them with the assistance of a private secretary, who had offered his services gratis, from purely patriotic motives. I accepted invitations only to some of the

principal provincial towns, as the labour of travelling every day to be honoured every evening with a public reception in a different place, give a lecture and attend a banquet, was too tiring and proved too much for my physical strength. As the most memorable evenings of this tour I would mention my *début* at Newcastle-on-Tyne and at Brighton. In the first-named great industrial town of the North of England, I gave my lecture, or rather my discourse, in the large theatre. The house was filled to the top, one could have walked over the heads, and the galleries were full to overflowing. Tailor's apprentice, servant, tutor, Effendi, Dervish, I have been pretty well everything in my life, but a stage hero I was now to be for the first time, and although not seized with the fever of the footlights, the masses before me and their enthusiastic reception had an unusual effect upon me. I spoke for an hour and a half, often interrupted for several minutes at a time by loud applause, and when, referring to the danger which threatened the Indian Empire, I called out to my audience, "The spirits of the heroes fallen in the struggle for India, who have enabled this small island to found one of the greatest Asiatic Empires, who have made you mighty and rich, their spirits ask you now, Will you allow the fruits of our labour to perish, and the most precious pearl of the British crown to fall into the enemy's hand?" the frantic, "No! No!" from all parts of the house almost moved me to tears,



and I saw with astonishment what a pitch of excitement these people of the foggy North can be led up to. A similar scene awaited me at Brighton, where my speech had also a wonderful effect upon my hearers. At the close of the lecture many, as usual, pressed forward on to the platform to shake hands. Among others an elegantly dressed, elderly lady came up to me, took both my hands and said in a choking voice: "Oh, my dear, precious England, you have indeed done it good service. Sir, it is a glorious, golden land; continue to promote its welfare; God in heaven will reward you." The poor woman trembled as she said this, and as long as I live I shall never forget the look of agitation depicted on her face.

I must not omit to mention some of the very characteristic proofs of friendship I received on this lecturing tour from private individuals hitherto absolutely unknown to me. At several railway stations the door of my compartment suddenly opened and dainty luncheon baskets plentifully filled were pushed in with inscriptions such as: "From an admirer," or, "from a grateful Englishman." The most remarkable of all these tokens of appreciation was the hospitality shown me by Mr. Russell Shaw in London. He offered it me by letter in Budapest, and on my arrival in London I was met at the station by a footman, who handed me a letter, in which Mr. Shaw put his carriage at my disposal. The footman looked after my luggage, we drove to



the West End, stopped at No. 26, Sackville Street, and I was led to the richly furnished apartments made ready for my reception. Here I found everything that could make me comfortable; the finest cigars, liqueurs, a beautiful writing-table, stamps, &c.; everything was put at my disposal, and I had scarcely finished my toilet when the cook came to ask what were my favourite dishes, and what time I wished to lunch and to dine. Not until afternoon did my host appear, after he had begged permission to introduce himself. Of course I received Mr. Shaw in the most friendly manner in his own house. He left me after having asked me to invite as many guests as I liked, and freely to dispose of his kitchen, cellar, and carriage. For three weeks I remained in this hospitable house. Mr. Shaw hardly ever showed himself, and only on the day of my departure he paid me another visit, asked if I had been comfortable and satisfied about everything, and, wishing me a prosperous journey, he left me. I have never seen him again. He was unquestionably a true type of English amiability!

Is it surprising, then, that these and other spontaneous expressions of appreciation made my political labours appear to me in quite a different light from what I had ever thought or expected? I realised, of course, that it was not only my political writings which made me of so much weight, but that it was founded on my purely scientific labours, which, although unknown to the public at large, had

won me credit with the influential and governing circles of England. Political writings, after all, can only be appreciated as an excursion from the regions of more serious literature ; and just as newspaper writing in itself is naturally not highly rated, so strictly and exclusively theoretical writing bears rather too often the character of sterility. True, not every science can be animated and popularised by practical application, but when the study has to be kept alive by active intercourse with far distant nations, politics, as the connecting link between theory and practice, become an absolute necessity, and the lighter literary occupation is as unavoidable as it is energising and beneficial in its effect upon the mind.

After I had spent a few hours with comparative grammars and text-editions, or had been occupied with purely ethnographical studies, I always felt a desire to write a newspaper article, and to refresh myself from the monotony of word-sifting in the field of political speculation. The best time of the day, that is to say, the morning hours, I spent exclusively in serious study, and at the age between thirty and fifty I could also devote a few hours in the evening to graver study. In the forenoon, between ten and twelve, and in the afternoon, between two and five, I used to apply myself to politics and journalism, with the help of a secretary. Through practice and custom I had now got so far that I could dictate two or even three leading articles

or other matters in different languages at the same time. When I approached the fifties, however, such *tours de force* gave me headaches and congestion, and I had to abandon them ; but long after I had passed the fifties I continued to dictate extempore—in fact, I generally wrote and worked from memory even in my scientific studies. Except the notes I wrote down during my Dervish tour in Arabic letters and in the Hungarian language, I have never had a notebook, and consequently never collected notes for future writings. Of course as was the material, so was the work produced, and it would be arrant self-deceit to try to conceal the blunders and defects under which so many of my literary productions laboured because of my mode of working. No, vanity has not altogether blinded me. Uncommon and curious as my schooling had been, equally curious was my subsequent literary productivity, and if there be anything to make me reflect with satisfaction upon those twenty years of literary activity, it is my untiring zeal and the strict adherence to my device "*Nulla dies sine linea*," in which I spent the beautiful summer of my life. Nothing of any kind or description either in my private or public life has ever made me break this rule, and no pleasures of any kind could ever replace for me the sweet hours of study or deter me from my once formed resolution.

I had the good fortune never to have sought or known what is vulgarly called entertainment, re-

creation, or diversion. As in the years of my trying apprenticeship I had to spend eight or ten hours a day in teaching, and devoted six hours to my private studies, so, thanks to my perfectly healthy constitution, I have been able till close upon the sixties to work at first for ten and later on for six hours daily, apart from the time spent in reading the newspapers and scientific periodicals. During the whole of my life I have only very rarely visited the theatre, and concerts were not in my line either, as I had no knowledge of the higher art of music. Social evenings, where I might have refreshed myself in conversation with my fellow-labourers, and have profited by an interchange of ideas, would have been very welcome to me, but in my native land, where society had only political aspirations and ideals at heart, there was no one who cared for the practical science of the East, no one interested in the actual condition of Asia, and with the few scholars, mostly philologists, who in the evenings used to frequent the ale-houses, I could not associate, because spirituous drinks and excess of any kind have always been obnoxious to me. A home— a “sweet home”—in the English sense of the word, has never fallen to my lot, even on ever so modest a scale, for my wife, a homely, kind-hearted, and excellent woman, was ill for many years, and if it had not been for the beautiful boy with whom she presented me, I should never have known what domestic happiness was. My study

and my library were the stronghold of my worldly bliss, the fortress from which I looked upon three continents, and by a lively correspondence with various lands in Europe, Asia, and America, could maintain my personal and scientific relationships. Mentally I lived continually in the most diverse lands and tongues, and through my correspondence with Turks, Persians, Ozbegs, Kirgizes, Germans, French, English, and Americans, I could remain conversant with the different idioms, and also continually be initiated in the smallest details of the political, commercial, and religious relationships of those distant lands. My post was, as it were, the link of union between the distant regions in which I had lived, and where I always loved to dwell in fancy.

I attribute it more to this than to my inborn linguistic talent, that after more than a quarter of a century I was able to speak correctly and fluently the various Asiatic and European languages. Hungarian, German, Slovak (Slav), Serbian, Turkish, Tartar, Persian, French, Italian, and English were all equally familiar to me, and the greater or lesser perfection of accent and of syntactic forms depended chiefly upon the longer or shorter practice I had had in speaking with natives. I cannot say the same for the writing in these languages. Here the Latin proverb, "*Quot linguas calles, tot homines vales*," did not hold good, for although I could write in several lan-

guages, I cannot say that I could write any one language ready for the Press, *i.e.*, without any mistakes. In former days I used to write Hungarian a good deal and fairly well. But afterwards I wrote mostly in German and English, and all that I have published since 1864 has been written in one or other of these two languages. In order to obtain more fluency of expression, *i.e.*, to feel more at home in a foreign tongue, I used at one time to read for half an hour or more a day in the particular language. Thus I became familiar with the manner of speaking, or rather the peculiarities of expression in that tongue, and when I had thus learned to think fluently in English, German, or Turkish, I also managed to obtain a certain amount of fluency in writing. I fear there can be no question with me of a mother-tongue, and the argument that the language in which one involuntarily thinks is one's real mother-tongue I cannot agree with, were it only for this one reason, that long practice and custom enabled me to think in any language with which I had been familiarised for some length of time. From my earliest youth I had read a good deal of German. I had studied in that language; and afterwards in Hungary of all foreign languages I came most in contact with German, and it seemed to come most easy to me. But afterwards I wrote English quite as easily—that is to say, after I had spent a few weeks in England, and although I never got so far as to be taken for a native, as was



the case with Turkish, French, German, and Persian, I had the satisfaction of reading in the criticisms at the time that the absence of the foreign accent in my conversation and my idiomatic style were remarkable.

From these observations about the linguistic conditions and changes during the fairly long term of my literary activity I will now pass on to a subject which has given rise to various conjectures in the circle of my acquaintance, and will not be without interest to the general reader. I refer to the material benefits derived from my literary labours, which, on account of their many-sidedness, and the international character of my pen, have been considerably overrated. I have already mentioned how much I made by my first book of travels published by Murray, and expressed at the time the bitter disappointment I experienced, how different was what I had hoped for and what I got. Subsequent English publications fared not much better; none of them brought me in more than £200 sterling, most of them barely half that sum. In Germany the honorarium paid for literary work was still poorer and closer, and 500 thaler (£75) was the highest sum ever paid me for any of my popular writings. I purposely say "popular," because for purely scientific works I received nothing, and my two volumes of Chagataic and Uiguric studies and my "Sheibaniade" alone have cost me some thousand florins, not reckoning the ex-



penses incurred with my *Ursprung der Magyaren* and *Türkenvolk*, for which I never received a penny.

Journalism was a good deal more profitable, especially in England, where some periodicals paid twenty or thirty guineas per sheet. I came to the conclusion that one hour of English article-writing pays better than six hours of German literary work, with this difference, however, that German periodicals lend themselves to the most theoretical, widely speculative subjects, while the English Reviews, in their eagerness for *matter of fact*, accept only practically written articles of immediate interest. German Review literature seems only lately to have realised that it is possible to write essays about serious matters without wearying the reader with a heavy style and endless notes, and one frequently meets now in the German periodicals with attractively written articles about the political and commercial relations of distant countries and people.

This was not the case when I began my literary career. German Orientalists, unquestionably the most learned and solid in the world, have always occupied themselves preferably with the past of the Asiatic civilised world, with textual criticisms of well-known classical works and grammatical niceties in the Semitic and Aryan tongues, while the practical knowledge of the East, until quite lately, for want of national political interest, was not at all encouraged. England, on the other hand, on account

of her Indian Empire, and her many commercial ties all over the Asiatic continent, has for long enough evinced a lively interest in the manners and customs of the Orientals, and since English writers have dealt largely with these, the general public has been interested mostly in this branch of Oriental literature. Of course the former traveller, once retired into his library, cannot so easily come forward with new practical suggestions. It is but seldom that he can offer a new contribution, and in spite of the excellent honorarium, the productions of his pen become gradually less, and do not give him a secured existence as is the case, for instance, with literary writers, or scholars who can write in an interesting and popular style upon some subject which is of all-engrossing interest in everyday life.

Taking everything into consideration, I must look upon my many years of literary labour only from the moral standpoint, and as such my reward has been rich and abundant. A collection of criticisms and discussions, which, quite accidentally, came into my possession, contains very nearly two hundred articles in German, French, English, Italian, Hungarian, Turkish, Russian, and Modern Greek, which make laudatory mention of my literary work. The number of criticisms of which I have never heard may possibly run into many hundreds more; witness the many letters I have received from all parts of the world, and which on the whole have

rather burdened than edified me. In spite of gross mistakes and many shortcomings, my literary labour has secured me a position far beyond my boldest expectations, and would justify the saying, "*Et voluisse sat est.*" Work has kept me in good health, it has made me happy and therefore rich, and work is consequently to my mind the greatest benefactor and the greatest blessing in the world.



## The Triumph of my Labours



## CHAPTER IX

### THE TRIUMPH OF MY LABOURS

FROM reading the preceding pages the reader will easily gather how it was that, after so many years of hard fighting and struggling, my labour brought its own triumph and gave me the gratification of my dearest wishes.

The psychological problem is clear enough, and the solution is not hard. Other children of men, animated by a desire to produce something new, give themselves neither rest nor peace in the pursuit of their object, but they hide the true motive which instigates them under a mask of modesty; they pretend to be the unwilling instruments of fate. I frankly admit that what animated me was the indomitable ambition to do something out of the common, something that would make me famous. I think I must have been born with this fire in my veins, this devil in my flesh. The confession brings no blush of shame to my face, for now in my seventieth year, looking back upon the thorny path of my life, I am fully convinced it was



this longing for fame and the insatiable thirst for activity in the early stages of my career which were at the bottom of all the inconsistencies of my life. On the one hand, the desire to put to some practical use the experience and the knowledge I had gained urged me on to take an active part in whatever was going on in Europe or Asia, while, on the other, my natural propensities, or, perhaps more correctly, the poverty and simplicity of my bringing up, made me lean more towards a quiet, contemplative life and the retirement of my own study. The severe rules of etiquette and the demands of society, where everybody is so important in his own eyes, have ever been distasteful to me, and often when I mixed with the leading people of the diplomatic world or of high life I felt wearied with the empty talk and hollow, would-be importance of these folks. These feelings were not calculated to fit me for a diplomatic career, for, notwithstanding my eminently practical turn of mind, I was anything but a man of the world.

Possibly—in fact, probably—these feelings would have become considerably modified in process of time if at the commencement of my public life, *i.e.*, on my return from Central Asia, I had had the chance of entering upon an active career instead of contenting myself with purely scientific pursuits. I had always had a secret longing for public activity, as I mentioned before, but at that time insurmountable obstacles and difficulties stood in

my way. In England I was certainly a *distinguished foreigner*, but still I was a foreigner, and not likely to receive the nation's unreserved confidence in important matters of State. In Austria every chance of coming to the front was cut off for me by ancient prejudices; and as for Hungary, its foreign affairs being entirely managed in Vienna, there can even to this day be no question of diplomatic activity. In bureaucratic and nobility-crazed Prussia the prejudices against plebeian descent had already been somewhat mitigated, and in so far overcome that the Iron Chancellor found for nearly all German travellers who had gained experience in foreign lands some employment in the diplomatic service. Nachtigal and Rohlf's have been entrusted with missions to West and North Africa, for Emin Pasha there was a regular fight, and Brugsch, who in company with Minutoli made only one journey to Persia, was appointed First Secretary to the German Embassy at Teheran. In spite of my excellent reception in England and the rest of Europe, in spite of my energetic publicistic activity in Asiatic politics, I was so absolutely unknown in Austria that when the Ministry for War once had the unlucky idea of publishing a map of Central Asia, obtained by secret means, and wanted to have it revised by an expert, they submitted it to Kiepert in Berlin. He advised the gentlemen in Vienna to refer the matter to one of their compatriots who had visited the scene, and only after

that the Military Geographical Institute thought of me. This wilful and persistent ignoring of me lasted for several years. When Austria sent its first Embassy to Teheran, and the Press mentioned my name, an application of mine met with the reply that I had not and could not come into consideration, because in point of social rank I was not even a *Truchsess* (*i.e.* chairbearer) at court ; and yet, as I learned afterwards, the Shah and his Government had received the newspaper report with pleasure. When Austria, before the Bosnian occupation, sent a mission to Constantinople to intercede for an amicable settlement of this affair, nobody thought of me, although, as was afterwards clearly shown by my personal intercourse with Sultan Abdul Hamid, no one could more easily than I have brought about a conciliation, saving the country thousands of human lives and millions of money, which the occupation campaign ultimately claimed. At the critical period of the last Russo-Turkish War it was considered advisable for the country to be represented at the Bosphorus by a non-diplomatic ambassador. The choice fell on an aristocrat held to be exceptionally cunning and clever, who before this was supposed to have displayed his sagacity in various ways ; but of Oriental affairs he had not the faintest notion, and through ignorance and simplicity he committed some gross mistakes. The fact that my many years' personal intercourse with the Porte, my

familiarity with the national customs, languages, and conditions, and my personal acquaintance with the Sultan, might have served the country far better, never entered anybody's mind ; not even my own countryman, Count Andrassy, who was then at the head of foreign affairs, thought of me. Ridiculous ! The very idea of it would have been preposterous in the eyes of Austria. A Jew, a plebeian by birth, how could he be admitted into the diplomatic service ? Knowledge and experience are of second or third-rate importance ; and as for literary proclivities, these had always been looked upon rather as a crime than a virtue in Austria. Birth, position, rank, and the art of dissimulation and cringing are worth more than all knowledge, and the proverbial stupidity of Austria's diplomacy best illustrates how strongly this mediæval spirit has asserted itself there.

In these circumstances it would have been only reasonable if, after settling down in Austro-Hungary as a writer, I devoted myself henceforth solely to literary pursuits. Quietly seated at my writing-table I learned to appreciate the sweet fruits of liberty and independence. Here I was safe against the chicaneries and whims of superior persons and the constraint of social forms ; the moral reward which honest work never withholds was worth more to me than all the vain glamour of rank and position coveted by all the world round me. Without wishing it, perhaps against my own will, the force

of circumstances finally landed me on the right track, and I found a vocation more in keeping with my past career. An active participation in Asiatic affairs might possibly have made me richer and more noted, but certainly not happier or more contented, for although I am not blind to the fact that literary fame can never, either with the public at large or in the higher circles, boast of the same recognition which birth and position claim as their due, I have nevertheless noticed with satisfaction that the fruit of intellectual labour is more real and lasting, more worth fighting for than all the pomp and vanity people are so fond of displaying. Whatever may be said in disparagement of writing, it remains true that the pen is a power, and its victories greater, more durable, and nobler than the advantages which other careers, be they ever so brilliant, have to offer. The pen needs not the gracious nod of high personages ; it depends on none save on the hand that wields it ; and if, in the face of the amount of general and light literature produced in our days, some might incline to think that the pen has lost its power, that its influence is gone, and that for a writer to rise from obscurity and the lowest position to the pedestal of esteem and appreciation is no longer possible, the story of my life will help to reveal the fallacy of such views. Even as the strenuous labour of my younger days raised me, the quondam servant and Jewish teacher, to attract the attention of all cultured Europe, even

so my unremittent efforts in literary work have secured me a position far beyond my merits and surpassing my wildest expectations.

I have already mentioned the widespread popularity of my writings, extending over three continents; I will only add here that, with regard to some exclusively literary works, certain circles—not ordinarily given to express admiration—could not help expressing their appreciation of them, and the Press of England, which for years had laughed at my political utterances, had at last ruefully to admit that I was right, that I had rendered the State great service, and that I had contributed many a brick to the building up of the wall of defence around the Indian Empire. During a lecture which I delivered in 1889 in Exeter Hall the late Commander-in-Chief of India, Sir Donald Stewart, remarked that my writings had often stimulated the sinking courage of the officers in India and stirred them up to endure to the end. Frequently I received letters of appreciation from various parts of India thanking me for my watchfulness over occurrences in Central Asia, and the constant attacks I made on English statesmen who were so easily rocked to sleep in false security.

There is a peculiar charm in the literary success attained after many years of persistent work—a success which hostile criticism in vain tries to minimize; for, in spite of an occasional disproportion between the battle and the result, the pen



leaves traces behind which often, after many years, come back to us as the echo of long-forgotten exploits. As I have just spoken of my political activity, I will here mention, by way of curiosity, that Prince Reuss, late ambassador of the German Empire on the Neva, drawing my attention to the effect produced by my leading article published in the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, said to me at the house of the German Consul-General Boyanowsky at Budapest : “ You do not seem to know how much importance the Asiatic Department in St. Petersburg attaches to your enunciations in regard to Central Asiatic politics. Your articles served the Russians at the time not only as guides, but also as encouragement, and you have rendered but a problematic service to England by their publication.” Personal experience on the scene of action, a constant, keen interest in the development of events in the inner Asiatic world, and the stimulus of ambition may have helped to give me a bolder and more far-reaching view than this body of statesmen possessed, but that my writings should carry so much weight I never thought. Comical episodes are not wanting either ; they are sure to occur in any public career pursued for many years together. When the despatch of the German Emperor to Krüger, at the time of the Jameson Raid in the Transvaal, caused such tremendous excitement in London, and everybody was talking about the increasing Anglophobia in Germany, I discussed this question, of course



from the point of view favourable to England, in a letter dated the 12th of January, 1896. The *Times* saw fit to publish my letter, which took up a whole column of its front page, and on a Saturday, too, so that the letter might lie over all the longer. Of course this article, signed "A Foreigner," attracted much attention in the German Press. Just at that time Leopold II., King of the Belgians, happened to be in London, and the German papers hit on the curious idea of connecting his Belgian Majesty with the "foreigner." Of course all were up in arms against the "Coburger," and the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of January 21, 1896, delivered quite a peppered sermon against him. It could not leave me quite indifferent to see a crowned head taken to task for my utterances, and I communicated the real state of affairs to the Belgian Ambassador in Vienna, but this *quid pro quo* has never been made public, for the *Times* never betrays its co-operators. One would scarcely believe how much the influence of the Press is felt, even in the remotest corners of the earth. In consequence of the expression of my views about the Islamic nations, either in Turkish or Persian, I received letters not only from all parts of the Ottoman Empire, but also from the Crimea, Siberia, Arabia, and North Africa, and hardly ever did a Moslem, or Dervish, or merchant pass Budapest without coming to see me to assure me of the sympathy of his fellow-countrymen.

The Mohammedans of India <sup>1</sup> were particularly friendly, on account of my relations with the Sultan, and invited me to give lectures in some of their towns, an invitation which tempted me very much, as I was rather curious to see the effect of a Persian speech delivered by a European among these genuine Asiatics. An open letter to the Mohammedans of India did much to strengthen these friendly feelings, and if it had not been for the sixty years which weighed on my shoulders I should long ere now have made a trip to Hindustan.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix III.

At the English Court



## CHAPTER X

### AT THE ENGLISH COURT

IN proportion as my works found consideration in the most obscure parts of the Old and of the New World, their effect in Europe was felt even in the highest Government circles, and it is not surprising that the travelling staff and the pen brought the obscure author into contact with sovereigns and princes. In England, where, in spite of the strict rules of Court etiquette, the genealogical relations of the self-made man are not considered of such great importance, my ardent defence of British interests could not be overlooked.

After the appearance of my book, *The Coming Struggle for India*, I was invited by Queen Victoria, whom I had already met on the occasion of my stay at Sandringham with the Prince of Wales, to visit her at Windsor, and the reception this rare sovereign accorded me was as great a surprise to the world in general as it was to me.

It was in the year 1889, on the occasion of my

stay in London, that I received a card bearing the following invitation :—

THE LORD STEWARD

has received her Majesty's command to invite

PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY

to dinner at Windsor Castle on Monday, the 6th May, and to remain until the following day.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *5th May*, 1889.

I had already been informed of the intended invitation by telegram, and as, for political reasons, it was not thought wise to invite and do honour to the anti-Russian author without further reason—it would have seemed like a direct challenge to the Court at St. Petersburg—the telegram bore the further message : “To see the library and the sights of the Castle.” When I read these words I reflected that if the Czar, Alexander III., could receive and mark out for distinction the pro-Russian author, Stead, without further ado, this excuse was almost superfluous, and Queen Victoria could very well receive the representative of the opposite party. However, I paid no further heed to these needless precautions, but went down to Windsor. A royal carriage awaited me at the station, and I drove to the Castle, where I was received by the Lord Steward, Sir Henry Ponsonby, an amiable and noble-minded man, who greeted me

warmly and conducted me to the apartment prepared for me. I had hardly got rid of the dust of the journey when Sir Henry Ponsonby re-entered the room and, according to the custom at Court, brought me the royal birthday book, requesting me to enter my name, with the day and year of my birth.

It was a noble company in whose ranks my name was to figure, for the book was full of signatures of crowned heads, princes, great artists, learned men, and noted soldiers of the day. As I prepared to comply with the request the uncertainty of the date of my birth suddenly occurred to me, and as I gazed hesitatingly before me Sir Henry asked me with a pleasant smile the reason of my embarrassment.

"Sir," I said, "I do not know the exact date of my birth, and I should not like to enter a lie in the royal book."

When I had told him the circumstances written on the first page of these Memoirs he took me by the hand, remarking pleasantly, "You need not be ashamed of that. Her Majesty lays less weight upon the birth of her guests than upon their actions and merits."

So I entered the conventional date of the 19th of March, 1832, and am quite sure that among the many guests at Windsor there was never another to whom the day and year of his entry into this world were unknown.



With the exception of this rather unpleasant, but otherwise comical, episode my stay at Windsor was a most pleasant one. The Court officials, whose acquaintance I made at lunch, vied with each other in their amiability to the foreign defender of British interests in Asia, and this was especially the case among the military officers, who soon struck up a political conversation with me. An Englishman, be he courtier, soldier, or an ordinary mortal, speaks unreservedly of his political opinions without any consideration for the party in office, and I was much surprised to hear one of the higher Court officials, an ardent admirer of Mr. Gladstone, speak in very sharp terms of the politics of the Conservative, Lord Salisbury, even drawing me into the criticism.

My apartments were in one of the round towers of the Castle, so full of historical memories, and as I gazed at the lovely landscape, with the Thames winding in and out among the trees, and remembered the ideas I had formed of this royal castle when I read Shakespeare, I was deeply moved at the wonderful change in my position. If some one had told me in the days gone by that I, who was then living in the poorest circumstances, and even suffering hunger, should one day be the honoured guest of the Queen of England and Empress of India at Windsor, that men in high position would lead me through the ancient halls, show me the royal treasures, and that I should sit next but two to the

Queen at table, I should, in spite of my lively imagination, have thought him a fool and have laughed in his face. The crown jewels never dazzled me to such an extent as to force me to worship their wearer. But every one must agree that the natural simplicity of Queen Victoria's manner, her rare amiability and kindness of heart, and the way in which she knew how to honour Art and Science, had a most fascinating effect on those who came into contact with her. It is a great mistake to imagine that this princess, placed at the head of the monarchical republic, as England may be called on account of its constitution, was only the symbolical leader of the mighty State, having no influence on its wonderful machinery. Queen Victoria had a remarkable memory ; she knew the ins and outs of every question, took a lively interest in everything, and in spite of her earnest mien and conversation, sparks of wit often lighted up the seemingly cold surface and reminded one of the fact that she was a talented princess and a clever, sensible woman.

Queen Victoria has often erroneously been depicted as a woman cold in manner, reserved, and of a gloomy nature, who, with her carefully worded questions and answers made a rather unfavourable impression on her visitor. This idea is quite incorrect. She certainly was a little reserved at first, but as soon as her clever brain had formed an opinion as to the character and disposition of the

stranger, her seeming coldness was cast aside, and was replaced by a charming graciousness of manner, and she warmed to her subject as her interest in it grew.

When, at Sandringham, I had the honour of walking in the park next to her little carriage drawn by two donkeys, she seemed at first to be paying scant attention to my conversation with the gentleman-in-waiting who accompanied us, but when I began to speak about my adventures and experiences in Central Asia, her interest visibly increased, and she made inquiries as to the smallest details. What most surprised me was that she not only retained all the strange Oriental names, but pronounced them quite correctly, a rare thing in a European, especially in a lady; she even remembered the features and peculiarities of the various Asiatics who had visited her Court, and the opinions she formed were always correct.

One evening, I think it was at Sandringham, she conversed with me for a long time about the East, chiefly about Turkey. She remembered all the Turkish ambassadors of half a century, and after having spoken for some time about Fuad Pasha, I took courage, and asked her if the following anecdote which I had often heard in the East were true:—

“They say,” I began, “that during one of his missions to the English Court, Fuad Pasha brought your Majesty a beautiful brooch as a present from

the Sultan, Abdul Medjid, and that some years afterwards your Majesty had a pair of earrings made of it. When on another mission Fuad Pasha saw and admired the earrings, your Majesty is said to have remarked : ‘ N’est ce pas, sa Majesté le Sultan sera bien fâché d’entendre, que j’ai gâté la broche dont il m’a fait cadeau ? ’ Fuad Pasha is said to have given the following witty answer : ‘ Au contraire, Madame, mon souverain sera enchanté d’entendre que votre Majesté prête l’oreille à tout ce qui vient de sa part. ’ ”

The Queen listened silently, then remarked—

“ It is a pretty story, but it is not true. ”

I found that this princess had more sense of the importance of strengthening British power in Asia, than many of her noted ministers ; and the Shah of Persia, on the occasion of his visit to Budapest, told me astonishing stories of the Queen’s familiarity with Oriental affairs. I was not a little surprised when she, at the age of seventy, told me of her studies in Hindustani, and showed me her written exercises in that tongue. The two Indian servants, with their enormous turbans and wide garments, who waited on the Queen at table and accompanied her on her excursions, were a living proof of the interest the Empress of India took in the establishment of British power in Asia ; and when I saw with what devotion and respect these long-bearded Asiatics waited on a woman, and what is more, a *Christian* woman, handing her food and drink, and

watching for the least sign from her, I could hardly refrain from expressing my admiration. The knowledge that the most powerful sovereign in the world, who guides the destinies of nearly four hundred million human beings, stands before you in the form of a modest, unassuming woman is overwhelming. And when I saw in the Royal Library at Windsor the numerous addresses and Presentations, and assurances of devotion from the Emir of Afghanistan and other Asiatic potentates, written on scrolls of parchment in large golden letters, or when I admired the crowns, sceptres, and Oriental arms, preserved in the Royal Treasury at Windsor, I could never tire in my admiration of the power and greatness of Britain.

Discretion forbids me to say more of Queen Victoria, and I will only add that the graciousness with which she received me, and the words in which she acknowledged my literary efforts on England's behalf, will always be more precious to me than all the orders and treasures with which sovereigns think to have repaid the author.

After the Queen's death in 1901 her successor, Edward VII., showed me many marks of favour. I had made his acquaintance (as I remarked on p. 248) in 1865, and during all the time he was Prince of Wales he never missed an opportunity of showing his appreciation of my literary efforts. Of all the monarchs of Europe and Asia not one has visited and studied other countries and nationalities of the

Old and of the New World as he has done ; consequently he is very capable of leading the politics of the giant kingdom he rules over. When, in the course of conversation with him, I touched upon the situation in Turkey, Persia or India, I found him quite familiar with all these subjects, and his opinion was never influenced by differences in race or in religion. Having noticed during his visit to Budapest that the Hungarian aristocracy did not pay the same honour to the man of letters as was done in London, he gave an evening party, and appeared in the drawing-room arm in arm with the present writer, whom he introduced to the assembled guests as "My friend, Professor Vambéry!"

King Edward is at once a clever writer and a good orator, as is proved by the book entitled, *Speeches and Addresses of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, 1863-1888*, London, 1889. When I visited him in 1901, shortly after his accession to the throne, I found, greatly to my satisfaction, that the possession of a crown had caused no change in his character. He was as amiable as before, and begged me to visit him as often as I came to England. He also proved his nobleness of mind on the occasion of my seventieth birthday, when I received the following telegram from the King's private secretary, Lord Francis Knollys: "The King commands me to send you his warmest congratulations on the seventieth anniversary of your birthday."



A few days later I received the following communication :—

“MARLBOROUGH HOUSE,

“PALL MALL, S.W.,

“*March 18, 1902.*

“Dear PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY,—I am commanded by the King to inform you, that he has much pleasure in conferring upon you the third class (Commander) of the Victorian Order on your 70th birthday, as a mark of his appreciation of your having always proved so good and constant a friend to England, and as a token of His Majesty's personal regard towards you.

“I beg to remain, dear Professor Vambéry,

“Yours very faithfully,

“FRANCIS KNOLLYS.”

This proof of royal favour naturally caused a sensation abroad, and also at home, where Government had taken but scant notice of my festival, and it was generally highly appreciated. As to why Hungary on this occasion again tried to prove the truth of the adage that no man is a prophet in his own country I have spoken in another part of this book.

All I wish to prove now is that King Edward VII. has always shown a lively appreciation of literary efforts and aspirations, and in spite of his exalted position does not allow himself to be influenced by difference in rank or religion.



Directly after his accession he requested the representatives of foreign powers in London to introduce to him all the foreign artists and authors who might come to London, as he wished to make their acquaintance. Thus he proves himself to be a true son of liberal Albion, and filled with the democratic spirit of our century.

As though to prove the truth of the proverb, "The fruit never falls far from the tree," the present Prince of Wales distinguishes himself in the same way, and by his amiability he has already won all hearts. At the time of my visit to Sandringham I lived in the apartments of the late Duke of Clarence, who was absent at the time, and thus I became the neighbour of Prince George, as he was then called. One afternoon, while I was occupied with my correspondence, I received an invitation from the Queen to join her in the garden; as I wished to wash my hands before going down I rang several times for warm water, but no one came. At length the young Prince came to my door, and asked me what I wanted. I told him, and he disappeared, returning in a few minutes with a large jug in his hand, which he placed, smiling, on my washstand.

Not at all bad, I thought, for the poor Jewish beggar-student of former years to be waited upon by a Prince! I have often laughed at the recollection of this incident, and have since dubbed the future sovereign of Great Britain, "The Royal Jug-bearer."

The King's other children also resemble him in this respect, and I often think of the following episode. One evening, at Sandringham, a gala-dinner was given in honour of Queen Victoria, and I was to take Princess Louise in to dinner ; the Prince of Wales, now Edward VII., took a glance at the assembled guests, then approached me, saying : " Vambéry, why did you not put on orders ? "

I was just going to make some excuse when the Princess (the present Duchess of Fife) remarked : " Why, Papa, Professor Vambéry ought to have pinned some of his books on to his coat ; they would be the most suitable decorations."

It was a thoroughly democratic spirit which reigned in the home of the present King when he was Prince of Wales—a spirit which he has introduced into Buckingham Palace to the no small anger of many narrow-minded aristocrats. King Edward VII. understands the spirit of his times better than many of his brother sovereigns, and his popularity in England and America is a very natural result.

My Intercourse with Sultan Abdul  
Hamid



## CHAPTER XI

### MY INTERCOURSE WITH SULTAN ABDUL HAMID

SPEAKING of royal appreciation, I cannot leave unmentioned the reception I had from the Sultan of Turkey, a curious contrast indeed to my former life in Constantinople.

My personal acquaintance with Sultan Abdul Hamid dates from the time that I lived in the house of Rifaat Pasha, who was related to Reshid Pasha. The son of the latter, Ghalib Pasha, who had married a daughter of Abdul Medjid, wanted his wife to take French lessons, and I was selected to teach her because it was understood that, being familiar with Turkish customs, I should not infringe upon the strict rules of the harem. Three times a week I had to present myself at the Pasha's palace, situated on the Bay of Bebek, and each time I was conducted by a eunuch into the Mabein, *i.e.*, a room between the harem and the selamlık, where I sat down before a curtain behind which my pupil the princess had placed herself. I never set eyes upon the princess. The method

of instruction I had chosen was the so-called Ahn-system, consisting of learning by heart small sentences, gradually introducing various words and forms. I called through the curtain, "Père—baba; mère—ana; le père est bon—baba eji dir; la mère est bonne—ana eji dir," etc., and the princess on the other side repeated after me, and always took trouble to imitate my pronunciation most carefully. Fatma Sultan, as the princess was called, had a soft, melodious voice, from which I concluded that she had a sweet character, and she was also considerate and kind-hearted, for after the lesson had been going on for some time she told the eunuch by my side, or more correctly, stationed in the room to keep watch over me, to bring me some refreshments, and afterwards she inquired after my condition and private circumstances. It was during these lessons in the Mabein that amongst the visitors who entered from time to time I was particularly struck by a slender, pale-looking boy; he often sat down beside me, fixed his eyes upon me, and seemed interested in my discourse. I asked what his name was, and learned that it was Prince Hamid Effendi, a brother of my pupil, and that he distinguished himself among his brothers and sisters by a particularly lively spirit. In course of time this little episode, like many others, faded from my memory.

After my return from Central Asia, when I

found other spheres of work, I kept aloof from Turkey, and I only remained in touch with the Ottoman people in so far as my philological and ethnographical studies had reference to the linguistic and ethnical part of this most Westerly branch of the great Turkish family. In my political writings, chiefly taken up with the affairs of inner Asia, the unfortunate fate of the Porte has always continued to touch me very deeply. The land of my youthful dreams, to which I am for ever indebted for its noble hospitality, and where I have felt as much at home as in my own country, could never be indifferent to me. Its troubles and misfortunes were mine, and whenever opportunity offered I have broken a lance for Turkey; without keeping up personal relations with the Porte, I have always considered it a sacred duty with my pen to stand up for the interests of this often unjustly calumniated nation. My Turkophile sympathies could, of course, not remain unknown on the banks of the Bosphorus, and when, after the opening of railway communication with Turkey, I went to Stambul, I received from the Turks and their ruler a quiet, unostentatious, but all the warmer and heartier reception. Our mutual relationship only gradually manifested itself. On my first journey I remained almost unnoticed, for after a space of thirty years only a few of my old acquaintances were left, and the *ci-devant* Reshid Effendi, under which name I was known at the Porte, was only remembered by



a few. My second visit was already more of a success, and my reappearance in public revived the old memory, for my fluency of speech had lent "the foreigner" a new attraction in Turkish society. Wherever I appeared in public I was looked at somewhat doubtfully, for many who had not known me before imagined from my real Turkish Effendi conversation that I was a Turkish renegade. Thanks to my old connections, the problem was soon solved. The Turkish newspapers gave long columns about my humble person, and extolled the services which, in spite of many years' absence, I had rendered to the country.

Sultan Abdul Hamid, a watchful and enlightened ruler, full of national pride, although perhaps a little too anxious and severely absolute, was certainly not the one to lag behind his people in acknowledging merit; and as an unpleasant incident prevented him from showing me his sympathies on my first visit, I was invited a few months later to pay another visit to the Turkish capital as his special guest. To make up for former neglect I received an almost regal reception. The slope up to Pera which in 1857 I had climbed a destitute young adventurer, I now drove up in a royal equipage accompanied by the court officials who had received me at the station; and when I had been installed in the apartments prepared for me by the Sultan's command, and was soon after welcomed by the Grandmaster of Ceremonies on

behalf of the sovereign, that old fairy-tale-feeling came over me again. My first quarters at Püspöki's, swarming with rats; my *rôle* of house-dog in the isolated dwelling of Major A., my *début* as singer and reciter in the coffee-houses, and many other reminiscences from the struggling beginning of my career in the East, flitted before my eyes in a cloudy vision of the past.

On the morning after my arrival I could have stood for hours gazing out of the window on the Bosphorus, recalling a hundred different episodes enacted on this spot, but I was wakened out of these sweet dreams by an adjutant of the Sultan who called to conduct me to an audience at the Yildiz Palace. As I passed through the great entrance hall of the Chit-Kiosk, where the Sultan was wont to receive in the morning, marshals, generals, and high court officials rose from their seats to greet me, and on many faces I detected an expression of astonishment, why, how, and for what their imperial master was doing so much honour to this insignificant, limping European, who was not even an ambassador. When I appeared before the Sultan he came a few steps towards me, shook hands, and made me sit down in an easy chair by his side. At the first words I uttered—of course I made my speech as elegant as I could—surprise was depicted on the face of the Ruler of all True Believers, and when I told him that I remembered him as a twelve-year-old boy in the palace of his

sister, Fatma Sultan, the wife of Ali Ghalib Pasha, attending the French lesson which I was giving the princess, the ice was broken at once, and the otherwise timid and suspicious monarch treated me as an old acquaintance. At a sign the chamberlain on duty left the hall, and I remained quite alone with Sultan Abdul Hamid—a distinction thus far not vouchsafed to many Europeans, and not likely to be, as the Sultan is not acquainted with European languages, and therefore, according to the rules of court etiquette, cannot hold a face-to-face interview with foreigners. The conversation turned for the greater part upon persons and events of thirty years past, upon his father, Sultan Abdul Medjid, to whom I had once been presented, Reshid Pasha, Lord Stratford Canning, whom the Sultan remembered distinctly, and many other persons, questions, and details of that time. As the conversation progressed the splendour and the nimbus of majesty disappeared before my eyes. I saw merely a Turkish Pasha or Effendi such as I had known many in high Stambul society, only with this difference, that Sultan Abdul Hamid, by his many endowments, a wonderful memory, and a remarkable knowledge of European affairs, far surpasses many of his highly gifted subjects. Of course I became gradually freer in my conversation, and when the Sultan offered me a cigarette and with his own hand struck a match for me to light it, I was quite overcome by the affability of the

absolute Ruler, Padishah, and Representative of Mohammed on earth, or "Shadow of God," as he is also called.

The first audience lasted over half an hour, and when, after being escorted to the door by the Sultan, I again passed through the entrance hall crowded with high dignitaries, the surprise of these men was even greater than before, and for days together the topic of conversation in the circles of the Porte at Stambul, and in the diplomatic circles of Pera, was the extraordinary familiarity existing between the generally timid and reserved Sultan and my humble self. As this intimacy has also been commented upon and explained in various ways in Europe, I will shortly state what was the real motive of the Sultan's attentions to me, and why I have been so anxious to retain his favour.

First of all I must point out that I was the first European known to the Sultan who was equally at home in the East as in the West, familiar with the languages, customs, and political affairs of both parts of the world, and who, in his presence, was not stiff like the Europeans, but pliant, like the Asiatics of the purest water. I always appeared before him with my fez on; I greeted him as an Oriental greets his sovereign; I used the usual bombastic forms of speech in addressing him; I sat, stood, went about, as it becomes an Oriental—in a word, I submitted to all the conventionalities which the Westerner never observes in the presence

of the Sultan. Moreover, he was impressed by all my experiences, and in his desire for knowledge he was pleased to be instructed on many points. All these things put together were in themselves enough to attract his attention towards me. The second reason for the friendship and amiability shown me by Sultan Abdul Hamid was my Hungarian nationality, and the Turcophile character of my public activity, of which, however, he did not hear more fully till later. The friendly feelings exhibited by Hungary during the late Russo-Turkish war had touched the Sultan deeply, and his sympathies for the Christian sister-nation of the Magyars were undoubtedly warm and true. Now as to the possible merits of my writings, the Sultan, like the Turks in general, was well aware of my Turcophile journalistic activity, but none of them had the slightest conception of my philological and ethnological studies in connection with Turkey. They had never even heard of them, and when I handed the Sultan a copy of my monograph on the Uiguric linguistic monuments, he said, somewhat perplexed, "We have never heard of the existence of such ancient Turkish philological monuments, and it is really very interesting that our ancestors even before the adoption of Islam were many of them able to write, as would appear from these curious characters." With regard to the skill and tact of Sultan Abdul Hamid I will just mention in connection with the subject of the

old Turkish language, that he, recognising at once my keen interest in everything of an old Turkish nature, drew my attention to some pictures in his reception-room, the one of Söyjüt in Asia Minor (the cradle of the Ottoman dynasty), and the other of the Mausoleum of Osman ; and he told me with some pride that these pictures were the work of a Turkish artist. He also told me that in the Imperial household, which lives in strict seclusion from the other Osmanli, a considerable number of Turkish words and expressions are used quite unknown to the other Osmanli more accessible to outside influences. The Sultan quoted some specimens, and, as I recognised in them Azerbaidjan, *i.e.*, Turkoman linguistic remains, the Sultan smiled, quite pleased, thinking that with these monuments he could prove the unadulterated Turkish national character of the Osmanli dynasty. This vanity surprised me greatly, as a while ago the Turks were rather ashamed of their Turkish antecedents, and now their monarch actually boasted of them !

The third, and perhaps the most valid, reason for the Sultan's attentions to me lay in the international character of my pen, and more especially in the notice which England had taken of my writings. Sultan Abdul Hamid, a skilful diplomatist and discerner of men, one of the most cunning Orientals I have ever known, attached great importance to the manner in which he was thought and talked of in Europe. Public opinion in the West, scorned



by our would-be important highest circles of society—although they cannot hide their chagrin in case of unfavourable criticism—has always seemed of very great moment to the Sultan; and in his endeavours to incline public opinion in his favour this clever Oriental has given the best proof that he has a keener insight into the political and social conditions than many of his Christian fellow-sovereigns. Fully conscious that his ultimate fate depends on Europe, he has always endeavoured to make himself beloved, not at one single court, but by the various people of Europe, and is anxious to avoid all cause of blame and severe criticism. England's opinion he seemed to think a great deal of; for although he simulated indifference and even assumed an air of hostility, in his innermost mind he was firmly convinced that England from motives of self-interest would be compelled to uphold the Ottoman State, and at the critical moment would come to the rescue and lend a helping hand. To hide this last anchor of hope he has often coquetted with France, even with Russia, in order to annoy the English and to make them jealous; but how very different his real inmost feelings and expectations were I have often gathered from his conversations. Sultan Abdul Hamid has always been of a peculiarly nervous, excitable nature; against his will he often flew into a passion, trembled in every limb, and his voice refused speech. On one occasion he told me how he had



been brought up with the warmest sympathies for England, how his father had spoken of England as Turkey's best friend, and how now in his reign, through the politics of Gladstone and the occupation of Egypt, he had had to undergo the most painful experiences. Then every appearance of dissimulation vanished, and I could look right down into the heart of this extraordinary man.

It was during a conversation about the advisability of an English alliance in the interests of the Ottoman State, that the Sultan in the fire of his conversation told me the following: "I was six or seven years old when my blessed father commanded my presence, as he was going to send me to one of my aunts. I found him in one of his apartments, sitting on a sofa in intimate conversation with an elderly Christian gentleman. When my father noticed me, he called to me to come nearer and kiss the hand of the stranger seated by his side. At this behest I burst out in tears, for the idea of kissing the hand of a Giaour was to me in my inexperience absolutely revolting. My father, generally so sweet-tempered, became angry and said: 'Do you know who this gentleman is? It is the English Ambassador, the best friend of my house and my country, and the English, although not belonging to our faith, are our most faithful allies.' Upon this I reverently kissed the old gentleman's hand. It was the B y k Eltchi, Lord Stratford Canning. My father's words were deeply engraved upon my mind, and so I

grew up with the idea that the English are our best friends. How bitterly I was disillusioned when I came to the throne! England left me in the lurch, for the demonstration of the fleet in the Sea of Marmora, as was said in Constantinople, was instigated more by the interests of England than of Turkey, which is not right. Her ambassadors—*i.e.*, Elliot and Layard—have betrayed me, and when I was in want of money and asked for a small loan of £150,000, I received a negative reply. So that is what you in the West call friendship, and thus the beautiful dreams of my youth have come to naught," cried the Sultan with a deep sigh. My explanation that in England, without the consent of Parliament, no large sums of money can be lent or given away did not in the least enlighten the Sultan. Oriental sovereigns do not believe it even now, for to them constitution and Parliament are mere names, invented to mislead the public. To born Asiatics, moreover, the liberal methods of Governments of the West are altogether unreasonable, and Feth Ali Shah said to the English Ambassador, Malcolm, these well-known words: "And you call your sovereign a mighty ruler, who allows himself to be dictated to by six hundred of his subjects (the members of Parliament), whose orders he is bound to follow? A crown like that I would refuse," said this king of all Iran kings; and my friend Max Nordau is much of the same opinion, for in his *Conventional Lies* he suggests

that all genuine constitutional sovereigns of Europe should be sent to the lunatic asylum, because they imagine themselves to be rulers and are ruled over by others.

Like Feth Ali Shah, and even more than he, Sultan Abdul Hamid hated all liberal forms of government. He never made a secret of this opinion, and during the many years of our acquaintance the Sultan repeatedly expressed his views on this matter frankly and without palliation. In one way, as already mentioned, it was my thorough Turkishness in language and behaviour—he always addressed me as Reshid Effendi and also treated me as such—which led him to make these confidences and to overcome his innate timidity and suspicion. Then, again, my relations with the successor to the English throne carried weight with him, and the invitation I had received from Queen Victoria induced him to see in me something more than an ordinary scholar and traveller ; in fact, he looked upon me as a confidant of the English court and Government—two ideas which to him were inseparable—to whom he might freely and safely open his heart.

“I am always surrounded by hypocrites and parasites,” he said to me one day ; “I am weary of these everlasting laudations and this endless sneaking. They all want to take advantage of me, all seek to gratify their private interests ; and all that come to my ears are base lies and mean

dissimulations. Believe me, the truth, be it ever so bitter, would please me better than all these empty compliments to which they feel bound to treat me. I want you to speak frankly and openly to me ; you are my superior in years and experience ; you are at home both in the East and in the West, and there is much I can learn from you." This candid speech, of a sort not very usual with Oriental potentates, naturally encouraged me still more, and during the hours spent in confidential *tête-à-tête* with Sultan Abdul Hamid I could touch upon the tenderest and most delicate points of the home and foreign politics of his court and the characteristics of his dignitaries. The Sultan always surprised me with his sound remarks. He bitterly complained of the untrustworthiness of his first ministers, called them not very complimentary names, and from the confidences of this apparently mighty autocrat I caught a faint glimmer of his impotence and utter loneliness. Once when I called his attention to the ignoble conduct of his chief courtiers, he appeared to be specially excited, and cried, "Do you think I do not know every one of them, and am not aware of it all? Alas! I know but too well. But whence can I procure other and better people in a society which for centuries has wallowed in this pool of slander? Only time and culture can do salutary work here ; nothing else can do it." And, indeed, contrary to all previously conceived notions, the Sultan had admitted into his immediate surroundings such young

people as had distinguished themselves in the schools, and were in no way connected with the leading families. His object was to create a circle of his own round him, and like these confidants at home, he wanted me, abroad, to show him my friendship by sending him at least twice a month a report written in Turkish about public opinion in Europe ; about the position of the political questions of the day ; about the condition of Islam outside Turkey, and to answer the questions he would put to me.

I readily promised my services, but soon realised that with all his apparent frankness, these confessions of a monarch brought up in strictly Oriental principles were not to be taken in real earnest, for when one day, in the heat of conversation, I made some slightly critical remarks, and ventured to question the expediency or the advisability of certain measures and plans of his Majesty, I noticed at once signs of displeasure and surprise on his countenance, and from that time little clouds have darkened the horizon of our mutual intercourse. And how could it be otherwise ? Potentates, and above all Orientals, are far too much accustomed to incense ; the coarse food of naked truth cannot be to their taste ; and when an absolute ruler is superior to his surroundings, not only in actual power but also in intellectual endowments, an adverse opinion, no matter how thickly sugared the pill may be, is not easily swallowed. From the very

beginning of his reign Sultan Abdul Hamid has never tolerated any contradiction ; apparently he listened patiently to any proffered advice, but without allowing himself to be shaken in his preconceived opinion ; and when some Grand-Vizier or other distinguished himself by steadfastness to his own individual views, as was the case, for instance, with Khaired-din Pasha, Kiamil Pasha, Ahmed Vefik Pasha, and others, they soon have had to retire. True, through his extraordinary acuteness the Sultan has mitigated many mistakes resulting from his defective education. In conversation he hardly ever betrayed his absolute lack of schooling, although he was not even well versed in his own mother-tongue. He said to me frequently, "Please talk ordinary Turkish !" His excellent memory enabled him to turn to good account a thing years after he had heard it, and his flowery language deceived many of his European visitors. But, taking him altogether, he was a great ignoramus and sadly needed to be taught, though in his sovereign dignity and exalted position of "God's Shadow on Earth," he had to fancy himself omniscient. Thoroughly convinced of this, I have, in my subsequent intercourse with the Sultan, exercised a certain amount of reserve ; I learned to be ever more careful in my expressions, and when the Sultan noticed this I replied in the words of the Persian poem—

"The nearness of princes is as a burning fire,"



which he took with a gratified smile. In a word, I was a dumb counsellor, and I much regret that the European diplomats on the Bosphorus did not look upon my position in this light, but laid all sorts of political intrigues to my charge; and that my relations to the Sultan, who had me for hours together in his room—and when I was there kept even his most intimate chamberlain at a distance—necessarily gave rise to a good deal of speculation. The long faces, the frowns, the despairing looks which the court officials in the Sultan's immediate vicinity showed me, and the way they measured me when after a long audience I crossed the hall or the park, often startled me and made me feel uncomfortable. These simple folks took me for the devil or some magic spectre personified who had ensnared their sovereign, and was leading him, God only knows whither. There were but few who had a good word for me, and many were quite convinced that at every visit I carried away with me into the land of unbelievers quantities of treasures and gold. When later on through my intercourse with the Moslem scholars and Mollas at court I had made a name as a practical scholar of Islam, and became conspicuous on account of my Persian and Tartar conversational powers, they were still more astonished, and the head-shaking over my enigmatic personality became even more significant. They took me for a deposed Indian prince, a Turkestan scholar exiled by the Russians, but most often for a dangerous



person whom it had been better for the Sultan never to have known. To the European circles of Pera I was likewise a riddle. Sometimes alone, sometimes in company with Hungarian academicians, I used to search in the Imperial treasure-house for remains of the library of King Mathias Corvinus, captured by the Turks in Ofen and brought over to Constantinople. I discovered many things, but I was branded as a political secret agent of England. A well-known diplomatist said, "Ce savant est un homme dangereux, il faut se défaire de lui." But the good man was mistaken. I was neither *dangereux* nor secret agent of any State; for, in the first place, my self-esteem revolted against the assigned *rôle* of dealer in diplomatic secrets; and, moreover, what Cabinet would think of employing a secret agent outside their Legation, maintained at such great expense? I do not for a moment wish to hide the fact that in my conversations with the Sultan about political questions I always took the side of Austro-Hungary and England; that I was always up in arms against Russia, and launched out against the perfidy, the barbarism, and the insatiable greed for land of the Northern power. More anti-Russian than all Turks and the Sultan himself, I could not well be, and the more I could blacken Russia politically the better service did I fancy I rendered to our European culture. To obviate any suspicion, the Sultan once wanted to invite me to a court dinner together

with the Russian Ambassador Nelidoff; however, I begged to be excused. Of the various ambassadors I have only attended a public court dinner with the Persian Ambassador (Prince Maurocordato), the plenipotentiary of Greece, and with Baron Marshal von Bieberstein, and these diplomatists were not a little surprised to notice the attention with which the Sultan treated me.

For several years I thus enjoyed the Sultan's favour and occupied this exceptional position at his court. As long as the Grand Seigneur saw in me a staunch Turcophile and defender of Islam, who, led by fanaticism, palliated all the mistakes and wrong-doings with which Europe charged all Oriental systems of government; as long as I regarded Turkey as an unwarrantably abused State, and European intervention as unjustifiable at all times, he gave me his undivided confidence and astonished me by his unfeigned candour.

Many years of experience in Turkish society had taught me that the Sultan is regarded as an almost Divine being, and consequently this extraordinary affability was all the more surprising. He treated me, so to speak, as a confidential friend, talked with me about State concerns, and the interests of his dynasty, as if I had been an Osmanli and co-regent of the empire. He conferred with me about the most delicate political questions, with a candour, which he never displayed even before his Grand-Vizier and his Ministers; and consequently my

letters to him from Budapest were free and unrestrained, and such as this sovereign had probably never received before.

Now, if there had only been questions of purely Turkish interests, internal reforms and improvements, there would have been no occasion to shake the Sultan's confidence in me, but Sultan Abdul Hamid's mind was always busy with foreign politics, and because in regard to these I could not always unconditionally agree with him, this was bound to lead in process of time, if not to an absolute rupture, at any rate to a cooling of our former warm friendship. For some time the Egyptian Question was the chief point of discussion. The Sultan often complained to me about the unlucky star which ruled over his foreign politics; that he had lost so many of the inherited provinces, that the loss of the Nile-land, that precious jewel of his crown, was particularly grievous to him, and that the faithlessness of the English troubled him above all things. As a matter of course he vented his wrath especially upon the English Government; and although he was not particularly enamoured of any of the European Cabinets, nay, I might say, hated and feared them all alike, it was the St. James's Cabinet which, whether Liberal or Conservative, had always to bear the brunt of his ire. He was on very bad terms with the two English Ambassadors who shortly before and shortly after his accession to the throne represented the Cabinet of St. James's

in Constantinople. Once, Lady Layard sent me for presentation to the Sultan, a picture of herself in a very valuable frame, and when I delivered it on the occasion of an evening audience the Grand Seigneur, generally so completely master of himself, became quite excited, and pointing to the portrait he said to me, "For this lady, whom you see there, I have the greatest respect; for during the war she has tended my wounded soldiers with great self-sacrifice, and I shall always feel grateful to her; but as for her husband," he continued, "I have torn him out of my heart, for he has shamefully abused my confidence." Thereupon he tore at his breast as if he would pull something out, and slinging his empty hand to the ground, he tramped excitedly on the floor, as if he were demolishing the heart of the absent delinquent. This act of passionate emotion I have noticed more particularly among Turkish women, and there are many traits in the Sultan's character which speak of the harem life. I tried to pacify the angry monarch by reminding him that Layard, as ambassador, had but done his duty in delivering the message, and that those gentlemen alone were to blame who had allowed such confidential communications to become public property. I quoted, moreover, the Koran passage which says, "La zewal fi'l sefirun" ("The envoy is not to be blamed"); but it was all in vain, the name of this deserving English diplomat had quite upset the Sultan; he was unwilling and unable to distinguish

between the actions of the statesman and of the private gentleman.

One cannot altogether blame the Sultan either, when we think of the bitter experiences he so often has had to undergo ; but in politics, justice and fairness have quite a different meaning from what they have in ordinary life, and Sultan Abdul Hamid most decidedly acted imprudently when, without taking into consideration England's most vital interests, he demanded of this State a policy which, on account of the altered general aspect of affairs, and on account of the growing insular antipathy against Turkey, had become impossible. That the Conservatives, in spite of all Mr. Gladstone's Atrocity-meetings, dared to appear with a fleet in the Sea of Marmora, to prevent Russia from taking Constantinople, has never been appreciated by the Sultan. He had always before his eyes the comedy of Dulcigno and Smyrna, instigated by the Liberal Government of England, and the occupation of Egypt appeared to him more perfidious than the challenge of Russia, and all the injury he had sustained from the Western Power.

In course of time the relations between the Porte and the Cabinet of St. James were bound to become cooler. *Inter duos litigantes*, Russia was the *tertius gaudens* ; and when in addition to the previous coldness the Armenian difficulties arose, the two great European Powers completely changed places in Asia, for the Russian arch-enemy became

the bosom friend and confidant of the Turkish court (not of the Turkish nation), and England was looked upon as the *diabolus rotæ* of the Ottoman Empire. With regard to the Armenian troubles Sultan Abdul Hamid's anger against England was not altogether unfounded ; for although in London good care was taken to keep aloof publicly from the disturbances in the Armenian mountains, the agitation of English agents in the North of Asia Minor is beyond all doubt. The Sultan was carefully informed of this both foolish and unreasonable movement. Whatever the Hintchakists and other revolutionary committees of the Armenian malcontents brewed in London, Paris, New York, Marseilles, &c., full knowledge of it was received in Yildiz ; the Armenians themselves had provided the secret service. As early as the autumn of 1890 the Sultan complained to me about these intrigues, and twelve months later he made use of the expression, " I tell you, I will soon settle those Armenians. I will give them a box on the ear which will make them smart and relinquish their revolutionary ambitions." With this " box on the ear " he meant the massacres which soon after were instituted. The Sultan kept his word. The frightful slaughter in Constantinople and many other places of Asia Minor has not unjustly stirred up the indignation of the Christian world, but on the other hand the fact should not have been lost sight of that Christian Russia and Austria in suppressing revolu-



tions in their own dominions have acted, perhaps, not quite so severely, but with no less blood-thirstiness. That his drastic measures roused the public opinion of all Europe against the Sultan was no secret to him. He was aware of the beautiful titles given to him, "Great Assassin," "Sultan Rouge," "Abdul the Damned," &c., and once touching upon the Western infatuation against his person, he seemed in the following remark to find a kind of apology for the cruelties perpetrated in his name. "In the face of the everlasting persecutions and hostilities of the Christian world," the Sultan said, "I have been, so to speak, compelled to take these drastic measures. By taking away Rumenia and Greece, Europe has cut off the feet of the Turkish State body. The loss of Bulgaria, Servia, and Egypt has deprived us of our hands, and now by means of this Armenian agitation they want to get at our most vital parts, tear out our very entrails—this would be the beginning of total annihilation, and this we must fight against with all the strength we possess." In truth, notwithstanding all the evident signs of a total downfall the Sultan still nursed high-flown ideas of regeneration and security for his Empire. He often spoke of the cancelling of capitulations and of the certain advantages to be derived from his Alliance schemes. He has always placed great confidence in the Panislamic movement which he inaugurated, and which he certainly directed very skilfully. His agents traverse India,



South Russia, Central Asia, China, Java, and Africa ; they proclaim everywhere the religious zeal, the power and the greatness of the Khaliph ; up to the present, however, they have succeeded only in making the birthday of the Sultan a day of public rejoicing throughout Islamic lands, and in preparing the threads wherewith to weave the bond of unity. One day, as we were talking about these plans, he denied them altogether, and pretended to be very much surprised. These schemes for the future were his particular hobby ; he spoke of them only to his most intimate servants and court officials, and to no one besides, not even to his ministers. The latter he called fortune-hunters, who deserve no confidence. “ How can I believe my ministers ? ” he said at one time. “ When a while ago I sent for my police minister, he came into my presence quite intoxicated. I drove the swine out of the room and dismissed him next day.” That he encouraged the evil, that with his strictly autocratic and absolutist ideas he prevented the growth of capable statesmen, that no clever politicians could possibly thrive under him—all this he would never realise, although I often hinted at it and reminded him of the Prophet’s warning, “ Ye shall consult one another.” He was and always will be an incorrigible Arch-Turk, who in the shadow of his Divine reputation would have free disposal of all things ; and when his First Secretary told him that I had been a *protégé* of the late Grand-Vizier Mahmud

Nedim Pasha, the friend of Ignatieff, he said, turning to me, "Yes, Mahmud Nedim Pasha was a singularly clever man, a true Turk and Moslem, and a faithful servant to his master."

I soon came to the conclusion that with a sovereign of this kind, there was not much good to be done, and without flatly contradicting him, I quietly adhered to my own political views. As I look at things now, it seems quite natural that I excited his displeasure, and that he looked askance at my English predilections. The Sultan expected of me unconditional approval of his political views ; he wanted to have in me a friend, absolutely Turkish in my views, as opposed to the Christian world, and willing, like many a prominent man in Europe, to hold up the East as noble, sublime, humane, and just, and to put down the West as reprobate, crude, and rapacious. No, that was expecting a little too much of my Turkish sympathies ! I have always been too much imbued with the high advantages of our Western culture, too fully convinced of the beneficial influences of nineteenth-century ideas, to lend myself to sing the unqualified praises of Asia—rotten, despotic, ready to die—and to exalt the Old World over the New ! No, neither imperial favour nor any power on earth could have induced me to do this, and when the Sultan realised that, he began to treat me with indifference ; he even told me once that he did not like children who could cling to two mothers,

and without actually showing me any hostility or dislike, as my international penmanship was not quite a matter of indifference to him, he dismissed me, to all appearance, graciously. He was undeceived, but I remained what I always have been, a friend of Turkey.

How it came about that, in spite of his ill-will, the Sultan for many years after still showed me favour, and even invited me more than once to visit Constantinople, I can only explain by the fact that, although distrusting everybody, even himself, he did not lose sight of the use my pen could be to him. Sultan Abdul Hamid, as I said before, had an indescribable dread of the public opinion of Europe, which he took into account in all his transactions ; he always wanted to act the enlightened, liberal, patriotic, order-loving, and conscientious ruler. He always wanted to show off the very thin and light varnish of culture which a very defective education and a flying visit through Europe (1868) had given him. Without knowing French he would often interlard his Turkish conversation with French words and sayings, to impress the ambassadors and other exalted guests, just as in company with Moslem scholars he made a special point of introducing theological and technical terms, without ever rising above the level of a half-cultured Moslem. Thanks to his remarkable memory, he was never at a loss for such terms, but his actual familiarity with either

European or Asiatic culture was very slight, since his kind-hearted but far too lenient father had never kept his children to their books. Kemal Effendi, the tutor of the imperial prince, told me in the fifties quite incredible things about the indolence of his imperial pupil. Reshad Effendi, the heir presumptive, had a taste for Persian and Arabic, and had at an early age made some attempts at Persian poetry, but Hamid Effendi, the present Sultan, was not so easily induced to sit on the school bench. Harem intrigues and harem scandal were more to his liking, and if one wanted to know anything about the secrets of individual members of the imperial *gynécée*, one had but to go to Hamid Effendi for information. It is a great pity that this lively and really talented prince had not received a better education in his youth. Who knows but what he might have made a better sovereign on the throne of the Osmanlis?

My intercourse with this man was to me of exceptional interest, not so much in his capacity of prince, but rather as man and Oriental. When in the evening I was with him alone in the Chalet Kiosk we used to sit still, trying to read each other's thoughts, for the imperial rogue knew his man well enough; and after we had thus contemplated one another for some time, the Sultan would break the silence by some irrelevant remark, or occasionally he would ask me something about my Asiatic or European experiences. As it is not

seemly for a Khaliph, *i.e.*, a lawful descendant of Mohammed, to hold intimate conversation with an unbeliever, or, what is worse, to ask his advice, the Sultan used to treat me as an old, experienced, true believer, called me always by my Turkish name, Reshid Effendi, and particularly emphasised the same when at an audience pious or learned Moslems happened to be present. Sultan Abdul Hamid, one of the greatest *charmeurs* that ever was, knew always in some way or other how to fascinate his guests. He delighted in paying compliments, lighting the cigarette for his guest, with a civility vainly looked for amongst ordinary civilians.

Of course, his one aim and object was to captivate and charm his visitors with this extreme affability. Sometimes also he was quite theatrical in his demeanour; he could feign anger, joy, surprise, everything at his pleasure, and I shall never forget one scene provoked by a somewhat animated discussion of the Egyptian Question. In order to pacify his anger against England, I ventured to remark that after the settling of the Egyptian State debt the yearly tribute would be paid again. The Sultan misunderstood me, and concluding that I was speaking of redemption money, he jumped up from his seat and cried in a very excited voice, "What! do you think I shall give up for a price the land which my forefathers conquered with the sword?" His thin

legs shook in his wide trousers, his fez fell back on his neck, his hands trembled, and almost ready to faint he leaned back in his seat. And yet all this excitement was pretence, just as when another time in his zeal to persuade me to enter his service and to remain permanently in Stambul, he grasped both my hands, and with assurances of his unalterable favour, promised me a high position and wealth. What induced the sly, suspicious man to this extraordinary display of tenderness was undoubtedly my practical knowledge of Islamic lands and of Turkey in particular. More than once he said to me, "You know our land and our nation better than we do ourselves." My personal acquaintance with all circles of the Porte of former days was not much to his liking, neither did he like my popularity with the Turkish people, the result of many years of friendly intercourse with them; yet he had to take this into account, and *nolens volens* must keep on good terms with me. Curiously enough, devoted as he was to his severely despotic principles, this monarch sometimes had fits of singular mildness and gentleness. Once I was sitting with him till far into the night in the great hall of the Chalet Kiosk. It was the height of summer, and in the heat of the conversation his Majesty had become thirsty, and called to the attendant in the ante-room, "Su ghetirin" ("Bring water"). The attendant, who had probably fallen asleep, did not hear. The Sultan called twice,



three times, clapped his hands, but all in vain, and when I jumped up and called the man, the Sultan said to him, almost beseechingly, "Three times I have asked for water, and you have not given it me ; I am thirsty, very thirsty." With any other Oriental despot the servant would have forfeited his head, but Abdul Hamid's character was the most curious mixture imaginable of good and bad qualities, which he exhibited according to the mood in which he happened to be.

Honestly speaking, these *tête-à-têtes* with the Sultan were anything but unmixed pleasure. Notwithstanding his pleasing manners and outward amiability, his sinister and scrutinising look had often a very unpleasant effect upon me. One evening, seated as usual alone with the Sultan in the Chit Kiosk, sipping our tea, I fancied my tea was not quite sweet enough, and while talking I stretched out my hand towards the sugar basin, which stood near the Sultan. He gave a sudden start and drew back on the sofa. The movement suggested that he thought I had intended an attack upon his person. Another time, it was after dinner, I was taking coffee in his company. I noticed that in the ardour of his conversation he was suddenly seized with an attack of shortness of breath. He actually gasped for air. The sight of his oppression was painful, and I could not help thinking what would be my fate if in one of these attacks the Sultan were to choke. One may



say it is foolish, and call me weak, but any one knowing something of life in an Oriental palace will agree with me that the situation was anything but a joke. Apart from this I got my full share of the moodiness of Oriental despotism ; sometimes it was almost too much for my much-tried patience. In spite of politely worded invitations I often had to wait for days before I was received in audience. Four, six, eight days together did I wait in an ante-chamber, until at last I was told, "His Majesty extremely regrets, on account of pressing business, or on account of sudden indisposition, to have to delay the reception till the next day." The next day came, and again the same story, "the next day." I remember once, during a visit to Constantinople, to have packed and unpacked my effects five times, awaiting permission to return home. Complaints, entreaties, expostulations, all were of no avail, for the Muneddjim Bashi (Court Astrologer) regulates his Majesty's actions, and these ordinances are most strictly adhered to. My intercourse with the Sultan was certainly not perfectly harmonious. I did my utmost to preserve my influence over him, but at last I had to realise that all my trouble was in vain, and that my efforts would never bear any fruit.

And it could not well have been otherwise. His policy was partly of a purely personal nature, as with all Oriental despots ; such policy, strictly conservative in tendency, was concerned

with the maintenance of an absolutely despotic *régime*. Partly, also, it was of necessity influenced by the temporary political constellations of the West. The indecision which characterises his least action is a result of the spirit which prevails in the imperial harem, where no one trusts another, where every one slanders his neighbour, and tries to deceive and annihilate him, where everything turns round the sun of imperial favour. Our diplomatists on the Bosphorus have often had to pay dearly for this characteristic of Abdul Hamid. At the time of the negotiations about the Egyptian Question Lord Dufferin once had to wait with his secretary in the Yildiz Palace for the Sultan's decision from ten o'clock in the morning till after midnight. Six times the draft of the treaty was put before him to sign, and each time it was returned in somewhat altered form until the English Ambassador, wearied to death at last, lost his patience, and at two o'clock in the morning returned with his suite to Therapia. Lord Dufferin had already retired to bed, and was fast asleep when he was roused by the arrival of a special messenger from the Sultan to negotiate about another proposal, but the English patience was exhausted and the fate of Egypt sealed. On other occasions there were similar and often more dramatic scenes, and even with simple dinner invitations it has often occurred that the ambassadors in question received a countermand only after they

had already started *en grande tenue* on the way to Yildiz.

As regards the distrust displayed by the ruler of Turkey, worried as he was on all sides, some excuse may be found for him, for true and unselfish friendships are unknown quantities in diplomatic intercourse. But Sultan Abdul Hamid behaved in the same manner towards his Asiatic subjects. He has always been a pessimist of the most pronounced type ; he scented danger and treason wherever he went, and everything had to give way before his personal interests. "The future of Turkey and the well-being of the Ottoman nation are always being discussed, but of me and my dynasty nobody speaks," he said to me one day. To all intents and purposes he always behaved as if he were master and owner of all Turkey, and as nothing in the world could make him see differently, I very soon saw the fruitlessness of my endeavours, and in future I acted only the *rôle* of onlooker and observer.

A sovereign who for well-nigh thirty years has ruled and governed with absolute power, who has succeeded in carrying autocracy and absolutism to their limits, while the greatest as well as the very smallest concerns of the State and of society pass through his hands, such a sovereign runs great danger of becoming conceited and proud, since his servile surroundings continually extol and deify him beyond all measure. Sultan Abdul Hamid imagines

it is owing to his statesmanship that Turkey, after the unfortunate campaign of 1877, has not been completely annihilated, and that at present it not only exists, but is sought after by the Powers as their ally. Laughing roguishly, he said with reference to this, "There is no lack of suitors; I am courted by all, but I am still a virgin, and I shall not give my heart and hand to any of them;" but all the while he was in secret alliance with Russia. What Sultan Abdul Hamid is particularly proud of is his relation to the German Emperor, which is, as a matter of fact, his own work, and not at all approved of by the more cautious portion of his people. The confidential *tête-à-tête* between the Osmanli and the gifted Hohenzollern is unique in its kind and abounds in interesting incidents. The Emperor William II. admires the talent of the ruler in his friend, which in its autocratic bearing he would like to imitate if it were possible; but he is clever enough to discount the reward for this admiration in various concessional privileges, &c. Well-paid appointments for German officers, consignments of arms, concessions for railway lines, manufactures, &c., the German Emperor has obtained playfully, as it were, and he will get more still, for in the Imperial German the Sultan sees his only disinterested, faithful, and mighty protector, and he is firmly convinced that as long as this friendship continues no one will dare to touch him, although Turkey, *stante amicitia*, lost

Crete after the victorious termination of the war with Greece. The patriotic and progressive Turk, however, thinks otherwise. He has not a good word to say for the German Emperor, for he looks upon him as one of those friends who encourage the Padishah in his arrant absolutism, whose visits diminish the treasures of State, and who has checked the national development of free commercial life, taking all for Germany and leaving Turkey nothing but some high-sounding compliments which flatter the Sultan's pride.

And so this political accomplishment of Abdul Hamid is most severely censured in Turkey itself, and the much extolled alliance with Germany may, in the event of a change on the throne, meet with quite unexpected surprises. With me the Sultan never discussed this relationship, only his favourite son, Burhaneddin, told me of his sympathies for the Kaiser, whose language he was learning. No true friend of Turkey, I think, can have much against an alliance with Germany; it would work very well, only Germany should advise the Sultan to introduce certain reforms in his country to raise the spirit of the nation, and instead of this wild absolutist *régime*, to work at the cultivation of capable officials. I have often told the Sultan so in writing, but lately my memoranda have remained without effect, for we have been deceived in one another. I have come to the conclusion that, with all my science and all my ambition, I can

never be of much use to Turkey ; and the Sultan has realised that he could not make a willing tool of me, and that therefore I am of no use to him. I must not omit to mention, however, that the greatest obstacle to a mutual understanding between the Sultan and myself lies in the political views we hold as to the most beneficial alliance for Turkey. While the Sultan, by his personal relations with the Emperor William II., thinks to screen himself securely against all possible danger, and as far as appearances go, likes to be exclusively Germanophile, he has not forgotten that the Russian sword of Damocles hangs over his head. He knows but too well that Russia has her thumb on his throat, that Asia Minor from the side of Erzerum is open to the troops of the Czar, that the Russian fleet could sack Constantinople within two or three days, and that this imminent danger, if not entirely warded off, would at any rate be considerably mitigated by submissive humility and feigned friendliness. Hence his peculiar complaisance and amenableness towards the court of St. Petersburg, and his behaviour altogether as if he were a vassal already of the "White Padishah on the Neva." Considering this state of affairs, it is not very astonishing that the rumour spread in Europe of a secret treaty between Turkey and Russia—a treaty according to which the Sultan had engaged himself not to fortify the Bosphorus at the entrance of the Black Sea, and



not to erect new fortifications in the north of Asia Minor, and other similar concessions. This treaty is said to bear the date 1893, and when the matter was discussed by the European Press, and I asked for information from the First Secretary of the Sultan, Sureja Pasha, the latter wrote me in a letter dated September 3, 1893, as follows :—

VERY HONOURED FRIEND!—His Imperial Majesty, my sublime Master, has always held in high esteem your feelings of friendship in the interests of Turkey, and your attacks on Russia, which has done so much harm to Turkey, have not remained unnoticed. But you know full well that nothing in this world happens without cause, and that the war Russia waged against us was also founded on certain causes. All this belongs to the past. To-day the Sublime Porte is on the best of terms with *all* the Powers; there is no necessity for any private treaties, and when the newspapers speak of a private treaty between Turkey and Russia, this is nothing more or less than a groundless and idle invention. In case such a treaty had been necessary, Turkey, being in no way restricted in its movements, would have notified and published the facts."

Later on I also touched upon this subject in conversation with the Sultan. We were speaking about the comments made in Europe regarding the



negligence in the fortifications at the entrance to the Black Sea, when the Sultan interrupted me and said, "Why should Europe criticise this? I have a house with two doors; what does it matter to anybody if I choose to close the one and open the other?" In a word, the Sultan has given me several irrefutable proofs that the persistent anti-Russian tendency of my publications was inconvenient to him, and that he would be better pleased if I attacked England or kept quiet altogether. Of course he would like best of all to banish pen and ink altogether from the world, and as it was impossible for me to support him in his absolute autocratic principles, a cooling of our mutual relationship was unavoidable.

The breach between us was made still wider by the publication of my pamphlet *La Turquie d'aujourd'hui et d'avant quarante ans*, Paris, 1898, in which I tried to refute the thesis—so constantly and erroneously advanced in Europe—that the Turks as a nation are incapable of being civilised, by comparing the state of their culture as it is now and as it was forty years ago. Naturally in a study of this kind I had to draw the connection between the progress of culture and the political decline of the land, and the question why, if the Turks are really advancing in culture, they should politically be overtaken by Rumania, Servia, Bulgaria, and Greece, I could only answer by pointing to the autocratic and absolutist tendencies of the

Sultan. Only the court and the unconscionable clique reigning there are to blame for the present decline of Turkey. With this article I increased my popularity in Turkey, but at court they were, of course, anything but pleased. Nevertheless the Sultan invited me to pay him a visit ; I did so, and the reception I had was highly characteristic. While the Padishah thanked me for the service I had rendered to the Turkish nation, the offended autocrat took my measure with angry looks, without, however, betraying his anger. It was interesting to watch the internal struggle of the offended tyrant, and I consider it only reasonable that henceforth he would have no more to do with me.

Thus ended my intimate intercourse with Sultan Abdul Hamid. The only benefit it has been to me was a rubbing up of my impressions of life in the Near East, a renewal of old relationships, and the editing of a few valuable old Slav manuscripts which I found in the treasure-house of the Sultan, and which were lent me for a considerable length of time. But the renewal of my acquaintance with the Orient was void of that charm which it had for me on my first visit. The East and myself are both thirty years older ; the East has lost much of the glory of its former splendour, and I have lost the vigour of my youth. I fancied myself an elderly man who, after thirty years meeting again the adored beauty of his youthful days, misses the wealth of her locks, the fire in her eyes, the bright-

ness of her rosy cheeks. Old Stambul, the Bosphorus, and Pera—everything was changed. The Sultan's mad love of extravagance, the unfortunate war of 1878, and above all the loss of Bulgaria—in fact nearly the whole of Rumania—had reduced the dominating class almost to beggary. Gone were the rich Konaks in Stambul, empty the once glorious yalis (villas) on the Bosphorus, and of the Effendi world, flourishing and well-to-do in my time, only a few miserable vestiges remained.

The Christian element, as compared with the Moslem, has increased enormously; the European quarter of the city is full of life and animation, and the Turk, always wont to walk with bowed head, now bends it quite low on his breast as he loiters among the noisy, busy crowds of the Christian populace. He is buried in thought; but whether he will be able to pull himself together and recover himself is as yet an open question.

When speaking of my renewed visits to Turkey and my personal intercourse with the Sultan, I made mention of my English sympathies; and I feel bound to say a word about the rumours then prevalent, which made me out to be a secret political agent of England, the more so since a member of Parliament, Mr. Summers, has questioned the Conservative Government regarding this matter. I have never at any time stood in any official relation to the English Government. My intercourse with the Conservative and Liberal statesmen on the Thames

and on the Hugli (Calcutta) has always been of a strictly private nature, and, just as my utterances in the daily papers were taken notice of by the public, so my occasional memoranda to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been accepted as the private information of an expert, friendly to the cause of England—information for which nobody asked me, and for which labour therefore I could claim no compensation from anybody. This anomalous position of mine was touched upon by the Central Asiatic writer, Mr. Charles Marvin, in his *Merv, the Queen of the World*<sup>1</sup> issued, in 1881. He there blames the English Government for having neglected me, and for leaving me in poverty, in spite of all my services. As regards this, I must say that I had at one time a modest yearly income, while working with all my might for the defence of India, a possession from which England derived in commercial profits alone many million pounds sterling; but I never suffered actual poverty, and it never entered my mind to take steps to obtain material acknowledgment of my services. English statesmen least of all thought of making any such acknowledgment. They looked upon me merely as a writer in pursuit of a purely platonic object, and this English cynicism went so far that when I published, in 1885, my Osbeg Epic, the “Scheibaniade,” entirely at my own cost, and asked for a subscription for twenty copies,

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 19-21.

the India Office declined the offer, although this work furnished so many data for the history of Baber, the founder of the Mongol dominion in India. The supposition, therefore, that my journalistic labours, although appreciated in England, ever met with any material recognition on the part of the Government, is altogether false. In after years I had an offer to enter the English service, but this I never entertained for a moment ; and when on the Bosphorus I furthered English interests, I did so from the standpoint of European peace, as an opponent of the overbearing power of despotic Russia, and as a Hungarian whose native land has common interests with England in the Near East. Of course such motives bore no weight with the Sultan. He judges everybody by his own standard ; and when I tried to defend myself against such accusations, and even one day quoted to him the saying of Mohammed, "*El fakru fakhri* ("Poverty is my pride"), he took the remark with a diabolical smile, and turned the conversation into another channel.

I must confess the character of Sultan Abdul Hamid has always been a riddle to me. I strained every nerve to penetrate him, but all in vain. Brilliant qualities and incredible weaknesses were always at strife in him. The man and the ruler were constantly at war with one another, and in the same manner his Oriental views always came into collision with the ever more pressing demands

of modern civilisation. Fear and suspicion were naturally at the bottom of this moral condition, and if from time to time he would have recovered himself, and listened to the dictates of his heart—for I did not find him heartless, as he is generally supposed to be—the instruments of his despotic arbitrariness kept him back, and made him commit deeds which in the eyes of the world were rightly condemned. In keeping with his own character was also the quality of the officials around him, who after the decline of the Porte acted as ministers of State. Divided into various cliques according to their personal interests, the secretaries, adjutants, chamberlains, court-marshals, body-servants, &c., have created quite a chaos of intrigues, plots, and calumnies round the person of their ruler, which he was quite able to cope with when in the full vigour of his manhood, and with his marvellous perspicacity could fathom at a glance. But even Sultan Abdul Hamid could not be expected to do superhuman things; physically never very strong, his nervous system at last grew perceptibly weaker, and in the thirtieth year of his reign he became very infirm. The reins of government fell from his hands, and gradually he sank from a ruler to being ruled over, and he fancied himself secure against all danger only in the mutual envy, malice, and hatred which he had provoked among those immediately surrounding him. In this terrible position the Sultan himself



was most to be pitied, and this doleful picture of the so-called autocrat I have often had occasion to contemplate at close quarters. Great State cares, pressing financial troubles, the threatening grouping of the European Powers, and the fearful phantom of an internal revolution, all of which tormented the Sultan, left him neither rest nor peace. The Sultan's fear of Young Turkey was exaggerated, for in Turkey revolutions are not instigated by the masses, but by the upper classes, and since these were quite impoverished and dependent on their official position, a revolt against the Crown is not very probable nowadays, especially as the old party of the time of the forcible dethronement of Abdulaziz exists no more, and the Osmanlis darkly brooding about the future of their land cannot so easily be roused from their sleep. If Sultan Abdul Hamid had been a little less despotic, and had taken account a little more of the liberal ideas of the more enlightened Osmanlis, he would have saved himself much trouble and many a sleepless night. But he is stubborn and firmly resolved to persevere with the *régime* of terrorism he has instituted. Hence his misfortune, hence his suffering. Indeed, the man had deserved a better fate. He is not nearly such a profligate as he is represented to be. He is more fit than many of his predecessors; he wants to benefit his land, but the means he has used were bound to have a contrary effect. I have received from Sultan Abdul Hamid many tokens of his



favour and kindness, and I owe him an everlasting debt of gratitude. It grieves me, here, where I am speaking of my personal relations with him, to have to express opinions which may be displeasing to him, but writers may not and cannot become courtiers, and even in regard to crowned heads, the old saying still holds true, "*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas.*"

My Intercourse with Nasreddin Shah  
and his Successor







PROF. VAMBÉRY AND HIS TARTAR, 1861.

## CHAPTER XII

### MY INTERCOURSE WITH NASREDDIN SHAH AND HIS SUCCESSOR

FOLLOWING up my intercourse with the Sultan of Turkey, I must not omit to relate the episode of my second meeting with the King of Persia. It was on the occasion of the Shah's third visit to Europe that I met him in Budapest.

Thirty years ago I had been presented to him as a Dervish who had visited Central Asia and spent many years among the Turcomans, at that time held in great fear by the Persians. I now appeared before him as representative of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and was not surprised that he did not at once recognise me. When at the head of the Academicians I welcomed him in a Persian speech in the pillared hall of the Academy palace, the good Persian monarch was quite amazed and hastily turning to his courtiers, inquired, "*In kist?*" ("Who is that?"). They told him my name and function, and made some comments in a low voice, whereupon the cunning Persian exclaimed,

“*Belli ! belli !*” (“Of course”), “Vambéry !” He maintained (which I take the liberty to doubt) that he remembered me ; but he warmly shook hands with me, and said to the Hungarian Minister standing at his side, “*Il parle bien, très bien notre langue !*” I do not wonder that my speech, in the Shirazi dialect and delivered in true Oriental style, took him by surprise, for as he afterwards told me, on the whole Continent he had not met with any scholar who could speak Persian idiomatically and without foreign accent. What did seem to me somewhat odd was a remark in his Journal (p. 378) that there were, even in Persia, few orators who for elegance and force of speech could compete with me, a compliment which struck me as particularly strange from the mouth of the Persian king. I remained three days in attendance on Nasreddin Shah, and had ample opportunity to admire the marvellous progress made by this Oriental since the time when I knew him at Teheran in 1864. Nasreddin Shah was the first sovereign of the True Believers who had learned to speak French tolerably well, and if he did make a little too much show of this accomplishment, seeing that his knowledge was but very superficial, it must be admitted that his judgment in matters of art, his knowledge of geography and palæontology, and his acquaintance with the genealogical relationships of the various kingdoms of Europe was most astonishing. In any case, he surpassed in knowledge of our



countries and towns, our manners and customs, all magnates and princes of the Moslem East, not excepting even the Khedive Ismail Pasha and the late Sir Salar Jung. As we saw more of one another he did not hesitate to express his opinion about many of our social and political views. So, for instance, being an Asiatic *pur sang* he detested Liberalism, and if it had not been for the dangerous nearness which made him turn against Russia, he would have looked upon the Czar as the model of sovereign greatness and the Russian *régime* as the ideal form of government. Naturally, the French republic was an abomination to him, the most woeful absurdity, and he could not understand how a society where, as he maintained, no one commands and no one obeys, a land without a ruler, *i.e.*, a sovereign, can possibly exist.

In his political utterances he was a good deal more cautious; he always made an evasive answer to my insinuations. Once, sailing on the Danube, I remarked that the Karun is wider but not so long as the Danube, the Kadjar prince looked gravely at me and said, "Thank God, no!" (*"If it had been the English would before now have taken Teheran,"* was my mental comment.) But in spite of his great reserve and cautiousness in political matters, I got a pretty clear insight into his political views. He had not for the future of his land the same bold confidence as his royal brother on the throne of the Osmanli, for while the latter's plans reach far into

the future, and to all appearances, at least, are of a very exalted nature, especially those relating to Panislamism, the Kadjar monarch devotes all his energies to the welfare of his dynasty, or rather of his own person. “*L'État c'est moi*” is also Sultan Abdul Hamid's motto, but the glorious past of his dynasty and his people awakens in him great and exalted ideas, the accomplishment of which he never doubts, while Nasreddin Shah, as the offspring of a Turcoman family, only lately come into power, and, intimidated by the danger which surrounded him on all sides, hardly dared to think of the distant future. In their personalities they are also very different. Sultan Abdul Hamid, although inferior in European culture to his *cher frère* on the throne of Persia, is shy and timid by nature, more affable and generous than Nasreddin Shah, who, in spite of all his European manners, remained the Asiatic despot and comported himself with all the peculiar pride and strictness of the Oriental ruler. His Grand-Vizier had sometimes to stand for hours before him, and when he wanted some information or other from me, I was often kept standing for a considerable time, regardless of my great fatigue ; and he used closely to scrutinise my face if I dared to express an opinion different from his. In his character he certainly was more Oriental than the Sultan, and considered this severity as indispensable to his sovereign dignity.

I was very much amused with the airs the

Persian king put on, as he went about bedizened with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and other jewels. Although his dynasty had been founded by a condottiere of the lowest rank, viz., Mehemmed Aga Khan, and as grandson of Feth Ali Shah, a cousin of this Aga Khan's, he was only the fourth Kadjar on the throne of Iran, he always wanted to parade the antiquity of his race. Before me he especially prided himself on his descent from the Mongol chief, Kadjar Noyan, and when I dared to question the correctness of this genealogy, merely brought forward by Persian historians to flatter their monarch, he looked at me quite angrily and ejaculated that "the sovereigns of the West were nothing but parvenus compared to their brother monarchs of the East." Persia, in fact, is the only land in Moslem Asia which can boast of a hereditary nobility, in a miserable condition, it is true, for not only Khans and Mirzas, but even royal princes may be found as drivers, house servants, and artisans of various kinds, but this does not prevent one from being proud of one's noble blood, and when Nasreddin Shah was in a good temper he expressed his astonishment that European counts, princes, and dukes attempted to be on a familiar footing with him, who could find his equal only among crowned heads. It is curious that the Turks even, who on account of their nomadic antecedents have never had any hereditary nobility, always try to make themselves out as aristocrats. Sultan Abdul

Medjid was highly pleased when the French poet Lamartine, whom he had invited to his court and afterwards presented with a country seat near Brussa, called his attention to the fact that after the Bourbons the Osmanli was the oldest dynasty in Europe. The high dignitaries of the Porte, frequently tracing their descent from simple peasants, labourers, or shepherds, had at one time serious thoughts of setting up coats-of-arms, and much regretted the religious restriction which forbids their taking some animal for their device. Human weakness is after all the same in the East and in the West, and in spite of the strongly democratic tendencies of the Arabian prophet, we may yet live to see Islam adopting hereditary nobility with many other evils of European culture. In the personality of Nasreddin Shah I have always detected this curious mixture of East and West, of the old and the new aspect of life which we find in so many neophytes of European culture in the Moslemic East. The Iranian despot held in particular favour Malcolm Khan and Jahya Khan, and the Europeans who for a time were physicians in ordinary to his Majesty.

Doctors Cloquet, Polak, and Tholozan instructed him in many things, and point for point the influence of one or the other could be detected in his manners and behaviour. That he always wanted to act the Grand Seigneur, and ostentatiously displayed his Frenchified airs, must

chiefly be attributed to his Iranian boastfulness ; he always wished to appear as the perfect European gentleman, and there was a time when at the court no one but his Majesty was allowed to wear a starched European shirt. Nasreddin Shah inherited many characteristics from his grandfather, Feth Ali Shah—I refer here especially to his love of show and tyrannical arbitrariness—but he lacked his grandfather's affability and kindly generosity. Nasreddin Shah was sometimes even particularly miserly, hence the story, circulated during his lifetime, of his fabulous private wealth, of which, however, after his death very little was to be found.

The European Press has delivered most unjustly severe criticisms upon the personality of this Oriental prince, and made fun of his Oriental manners. It is only natural that he should commit occasional mistakes of etiquette, for what Western sovereign or prince when visiting at an Eastern court would not be guilty of similar blunders ? It is said that in Berlin, after dining at the royal table, he turned to the Emperor William and the Empress Augusta and loudly belched, which in Central Asia is an expression of gratitude for the hospitality received and always acknowledged with good grace. At dinner with the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House he is said to have thrown the asparagus stumps over his back on to the floor, and, in order not to shame his guest, the Prince, now King of England, and all the other guests imme-

diately did the same, greatly to the disgust of the attendants. Quite a collection of similar anecdotes were at the time in circulation about him, but I think they must be grossly exaggerated, for Nasreddin Shah never neglected to make strict inquiry into the customs of the lands he visited, and more than once I have given him information upon minor details. The Persian king felt much freer in Europe than in his own land. In Teheran, when he went out for a drive, a long row of attendants marched on either side of him, who, armed with long staves, cleared every one out of the way. In Budapest it happened that a poor labourer's wife pressed up quite close to him to admire the great diamonds on his coat. I motioned to the woman to go out of the way, but the King said, "Let her come; she wants to see my jewels close to." He even stopped a minute or two to let the woman stare at him to her heart's content. In a word, the man was better than his reputation, and when in May, 1896, a day before the Jubilee of his fifty years' reign, he fell a victim to the murderous bullet of Riza Khan, I thought to myself the man deserved a better end, for as a matter of fact he had to pay with his life for the tyranny of his officials. At first it was supposed that Riza Khan belonged to the secret society of the Babis, but, as was proved later on, he took this means to revenge himself for the unheard-of injustice of the Governor of Kerman, against which he had vainly sought protection.



Eleven years after my meeting with Nasreddin I met with his son, Mozaffareddin Shah, who in 1900 on his return from Paris passed through the capital of Hungary. From my *Wanderings and Experiences in Persia* the reader will recall that I had made the acquaintance of the young ruler in Tabris in 1862, where, a nine year old boy and the heir-apparent to the throne, he occupied the position of Governor of Azerbaidshan. Physically weak and insignificant as he was then, I found him now sickly and quite broken down. Contrexéville and Marienbad were resorted to in vain to relieve his intense suffering, and the undeniable signs of disease impressed upon his features clearly revealed the desperate struggle that he fought within himself. The poor prince was really worthy of a better fate.

Being by nature timid and reticent, the very strict education which his father had deemed it necessary to give him had robbed him of all energy. He liked best to lose himself in quiet contemplation, and in his childish simplicity was hardly a fit ruler for a land so miserably desolate as Persia, nor was he likely to carry out his good intentions of leading his people into the way of modern culture. He was very pleasant with me, more so than his father had been. He hardly remembered our meeting at Tabris, but he had carefully read the memoirs of his father's travels, in which my small personality had received most



laudatory mention, and so he was prepared to meet me long before he arrived at Budapest. On the journey from Vienna to Budapest he had asked several times if I was still alive, and if he would be sure to see me at Budapest. Arrived at the station, where he was received by the son of the Archduke Joseph and the Hungarian State Ministers, he looked round inquiringly and said, "*Vambéry kudjast?*" ("Where is Vambéry?"). I was called; he pressed my hand in the friendliest manner, and straightway invited me to come with him to the hotel. I did as he asked me, and during his stay in the Hungarian capital was frequently with him. These visits led to a more intimate intercourse, and I found out (1) that the much-to-be-pitied-king was very ill, and that the throne of Iran was not at all the right place for him; (2) that he had the best intentions in the world, was quite alive to the superior advantages of modern culture, and had a great desire to reform his country if only he had the necessary energy, money, and men. But all three unfortunately failed him, as well as all other means, and when I gave him a picture of Persia's future in its regenerate condition, with railways, streets, manufactories, and similar advantages of modern culture, he looked straight before him and said, "*Belli, belli! leikin wakit mikhahed*" ("Very well, very well, but that will take time"). Also in discussing political questions I found him less close than his father, who loved to give himself the

appearance of a Persian Bismarck. Mozaffareddin expressed himself quite freely and frankly about the political condition of his land, and when I remarked jokingly that in Europe he was looked upon as a partisan of Russia, because in Tabris as heir to the throne he had complied with all Russia's demands, he laughed out loud and said, "Am I the only one who in default of counter-arms has feigned friendship for this mighty, ambitious opponent?" He had not much to say in favour of England, although he agreed with me that this country would never do any harm to Persia. "But," said he, "Britain's friendship is cold as ice, and has always expressed itself in empty words." And perhaps he was not altogether wrong. He was very much down on the politics of Lord Salisbury, who had declined his support to a contemplated Persian loan in London, Persia thus being compelled to borrow money from Russia. Referring to the riskiness of this step, the king remarked, "What were we to do? When my father died it was said that he had left private means to the amount of about four million pounds, and that these moneys were packed away in chests in the cellar. There was not a word of truth in all this. Instead of money my father left debts, and when I came to the throne I was unable to pay not merely the State officials, but even the court expenses and the servants. I was forced to get a loan from somewhere, and England drove me into the arms of Russia."

Taking it altogether, Mozaffareddin Shah earnestly desired to reform his land thoroughly, and in its internal arrangements to introduce many of the modernisations which had particularly struck him in his European travels. Unfortunately the good man did not know where to begin and what means to use to attain his object. Discouraged and embittered by the everlasting wrangling and quarrelling in his immediate *entourage*, he seemed to stand in mortal dread of his Grand-Vizier, Ali Asghar Khan. This man, the son of a Georgian renegade from the Caucasus, had practically made the Shah the unwilling tool of his intriguing and rare abilities. He comported himself as a servant, but was in reality the master of his master and the ruler of Persia. I was often an eye-witness when the two were together. The Shah, apathetically seated in his easy chair, would speak with as much authority as the words of his first minister were servile and submissive; but scarcely had he felt the piercing glance of the latter than he would suddenly stop short and sink back in his armchair. Behind the door listened his secretary and faithful servant, who occasionally made his presence known by a low cough, upon which the Vizier would angrily turn towards the door, and strongly accentuating the submissive words continue his harangue. Master of the situation and with an insatiable desire for power and gain, the Grand-Vizier might possibly have been useful to the country if the violent op-

position of his many rivals had not occupied all his energy, and the secret hostility of high dignitaries and the rivalry of European ambassadors at court had not effectually frustrated all attempts at any healthy reform. Even as Nasreddin's various journeys to Europe remained fruitless for Persia, so it was with the efforts made by his son. After his return from Europe the Shah hastened to change the cut and the colour of the uniform of certain court officials. High-flown orders were issued, but not followed up; the money borrowed from the Russians soon came to an end; anarchy, misery, and confusion were bound to increase apace.

To complete the above notes about my intercourse with the Oriental princes and grandees, I will attempt to throw some light upon their private life and mental condition, points which would not be open to a foreigner in their intercourse with them, but which could not be hidden from me, the supposed Asiatic. The personality of the Oriental ruler is still more or less a curiosity in Europe; he is still gazed at and admired as something out of the common; and naturally so, for the attributes of Oriental Majesty are always extravagantly magnified, and, candidly speaking, our minds are still somewhat under the spell of the "Thousand and One Nights" stories, although current literature has here and there somewhat ruthlessly torn away the magic veil which surrounds these demi-

gods of our imagination. Demigods they are no longer to their own subjects even, for their crowns have lost too many of the jewels whose brilliancy dazzled the eyes of the beholders, and the source is dry which furnished the means wherewith the faithfulness and loyalty of their subjects could be secured. I have been on intimate terms with two Sultans, two Shahs, and several Khans; I have watched them closely, and I must honestly say that I consider their position anything but an enviable one; for with a few exceptions they are more ruled over than ruling, and in spite of their apparent omnipotence, the fear with which they inspire those nearest them is not nearly so great as the fear to which they themselves are exposed in their constant anxiety about their personal safety. When late in the evening I was sitting quite alone in one of the apartments of the Yildiz Palace, and in the stillness of the night was startled by the echo of the dull, heavy step of the patrol passing close under the windows, I often thought to myself "What in all the world can compensate for such a terrible existence?" I will admit that Sultan Abdul Hamid is more anxious and timorous than many of his Oriental brother sovereigns, for his exaggerated precautions are rightly ridiculed, but from the fact that he never feels safe by day or by night, never sleeps peacefully, that with all he eats and drinks he thinks of poison, and that on all occasions and everywhere he scents danger, for such an existence the greatest power

and majesty, all the glory in the world and all its submissive homage are but a poor exchange and in nowise adequate compensation for all the quaking and trembling that it involves. A quiet and peaceful life is practically impossible at an Oriental court, considering the everlasting quarrelling, intriguing, and jealousy prevailing among the servants and officials. All covet the favour of the unfortunate autocrat, each one tries to outdo the other, each one seeks the destruction of his neighbour, and when to this pandemonium are added the intrigues of the womenfolk in the harem, it is easy to see how little joy there is in the life of an Oriental despot, nay, rather how deplorable is the fate of such a monarch.

In cases where conceit has a stronger hold upon the senses, where the ruler in his diseased fancy behaves himself like a superhuman being, as, for instance, Sultan Abdul Aziz, such an one knows but little fear and in the shelter of his imaginary security manages to make his existence fairly tolerable. The story is told of this latter Sultan that during his European journey in 1867, when making a pleasure trip on the Rhine to Coblenz, he asked of those with him whether this canal had been dug for his special benefit, and when in Budapest on board one of the Danube steamers the Turkish Consul, Commandant A., a cultured officer educated in Europe, met him and saluted in European fashion, the Sultan in my presence



turned to Fuad Pasha and remarked: "Why did not this rude fellow kiss my feet?" This Sultan, half mad as he was, who decorated horses, dogs, and rams, who spent many millions on useless buildings, was little troubled with anxiety and fear, up to the memorable night when he was informed of his deposition; but other despots are in constant dread of their lives. Nasreddin Shah, even in his hunting lodge in Djadjerud, never neglected to have his couch surrounded by a company of soldiers; and his son, Mozaffareddin Shah, now on the throne, keeps awake for whole nights together for fear of being attacked and murdered. Can anything be more awful?

Of late years Oriental despots have come to the conclusion that in foreign lands, among the unbelievers, they are safer, freer, and altogether happier than in their own country. Abdul Ahad, the Emir of Bokhara, visits the Russian baths of Pyatigorsk in preference to any other, and from the frequent visits of the Persian kings to Europe it is very evident that the Shehinsahs of Iran, notwithstanding their Asiatic despotism, find in the land of the Franks—whose very touch defileth, in the eyes of the Shiites—more of pleasure and recreation than they can ever enjoy at home. In Teheran when the Shah rides or drives out, two long rows of Ferrashes (attendants) precede him as already mentioned, armed with long staves, to keep the beloved subjects at a safe distance and to clear



the way. Windows and doors are tightly shuttered and curtained to prevent any one from setting eyes on their lord and master ; the sanctity (otherwise security) of the ruler's sublime person demands this. When the Shah comes to a European city crowds of curious Westerners receive him ; he is cheered and welcomed, and the homage of the public pleases him, and makes him feel stronger and more confident than before. And then there is the courtesy he meets with at our courts ; he fancies himself on equality with the powerful sovereigns of the West ; all this increases his self-respect, and therein lies the special charm of his European travels.

If here in Europe we have been under the impression that the experiences gained in these visits to Western lands would be used in the interests of Western culture and for the civilising of his own land, we have been far too sanguine in our expectations, for these pleasure trips of Oriental sovereigns have never benefited their respective countries. On the contrary, they drain the land's resources. With his three journeys to Europe Nasreddin Shah has utterly ruined the finances of Persia, already in a very unsound condition. They did not lead to any profitable innovations, and it is a well-known fact that the travels of his son Mozaffareddin Shah were paid for by a Russian loan, originally intended for the economic and administrative amelioration of the land.

No, these Asiatic demigods do not lie on a bed

of roses. Their life is bare and lonely, their enjoyment full of anxiety and fear, the hundreds of thousands who writhe before them in the dust and do them homage with bombastic titulations are their greatest enemies, and the worst victims of despotism are the despots themselves. Can one be surprised that I brought no rosy reminiscences from the Oriental courts?

The Struggle's End, and yet no End



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE STRUGGLE'S END, AND YET NO END

THE preceding autobiographical notes give in broad outline the experiences and varied fortunes of my career from childhood to old age. They give, so to speak, the material picture of an unusual life, with all its varieties of light and shade, the struggles and adventures of the tailor's apprentice, private tutor, student, servant, Effendi, Dervish, and international writer. The details of this picture are, after all, but the outside wrappings, the shell, not the core or inner substance. They do not depict adequately the mental struggles and sufferings which have marked all these different phases of my existence, and which each in their turn have deeply influenced my thoughts and reflections. The enumeration of certain facts may, to some extent, gratify one's personal vanity, but since the empty satisfaction of self-glorification is hardly an adequate return for all the bitter sufferings of my past life, I must complete my story by giving expression to my reflections resulting from a careful comparison of certain institutions,

manners, and customs in Asiatic and European society. These reflections, the chief factors of the transformation of my mental life, are very possibly shared by many others, and explained in various ways, but the manner in which I gained my experience was rather out of the ordinary, for before me no European or Asiatic ever acted so many different parts on the world's stage in two continents, and I will therefore endeavour to draw a comparison between some institutions, manners, and customs of society in Asia and Europe. I will reveal a picture of my mental condition when, saturated with Asiatic ways of thinking, I made the acquaintance of various European countries, and how, when comparing the two worlds, I came to the conclusion that here, as there, shortsightedness, prejudice, prepossession, and want of objectiveness prevented the forming of sound and just opinions.

When first I left the West to enter the Asiatic world I had but a vague theoretical knowledge of the lands and peoples of Europe, gathered from a study of the literatures of the various Western nations, but I had no practical acquaintance with any of them. My first experiences of Turkish society in Stambul—which, in spite of the introduction of many Western customs, still at bottom bears a decided Asiatic stamp—together with the charm of novelty and my decided Oriental predilections, were in many respects of a pleasing nature. The kindly reception and the friendly treatment extended to

the stranger regardless of his antecedents, are bound to charm and captivate the recipient. One feels at once at home everywhere, and a cursory comparison of the two kinds of culture is decidedly in favour of the Old World. Afterwards—that is, when one has spent some time among the Asiatics, and has obtained an intimate knowledge of their views of religion, men, and the world in general—a certain feeling of monotony, indifference, and sleepiness creeps over us. Our blood becomes sluggish, we yawn and fidget while the Oriental, always imperturbable, sits unmoved, with evident satisfaction, gazing up at the sky.

Gradually, the more I became familiar with the inner Asiatic world, these feelings took possession of me. In Persian society these thoroughly Asiatic features worried me, but in Central Asia, where the world is eight hundred years older, I positively shuddered at what I saw. The very things which, on my first acquaintance with Asiatic life, had pleased me, I now recognised as the causes of its decay, its tyranny, and its misery. The Old World, never at any time free from the defects and vices which now, in its ruined condition, stare us in the face, became despicably mean in my estimation, and unworthy of men, and with longing eyes I turned to the West again. I cannot describe the feeling of delight with which I crossed the Eastern borders of our modern world; with each day's journey I breathed more freely. I rejoiced to see the last of



the ruins, the misery, the sterility of the older world, and the pictures which to my heated imagination, partly because of their novelty, had had so much fascination for me in my younger days, now made me shudder when I thought of them.

Such was my state of mind on returning from Asia. If before starting on my Oriental travels I had been in a position to obtain a deeper insight into the religious, social, and political conditions of Europe than lay within the reach of the poor, self-taught scholar, my impressions and estimate of Asia might have been different, and the result of my comparative study of the two cultures might have been more of an objective nature. But there, as here, I came as a man, who, under the magic of the first impression, saw everything in a rosy light, and was pleased with everything, and only afterwards, when the cold light of reality and of clearer perception showed me everything in its right light, I began to look upon Europe with quite different eyes, and my opinion about the actions of the Western world became considerably modified. And now, in the evening of my life, roaming the horizon of rich experience with unprejudiced eyes, and noting the light and shady sides of both the Old and the New World, of Asiatic and European culture; now that no personal interests and no prejudices obscure my vision, now I see and judge quite differently, and I count it my duty to acquaint the reader with these modified views, the more so

as I know by experience how astonishingly small is the number of critics who, free from the trammels of religion and nationality, have devoted themselves to the comparative study of the old and the new culture. The clatter of the chains can always be heard in the praise or disapproval of our critics. On this side, as on the other, partiality has blocked the way to truth ; and since the new century has, in many respects, opened the way to free thought, we can now unreservedly and without fear discuss the good and the evil, the advantages and disadvantages, of the two worlds. Those who have read my travels, and realise the miseries, sufferings, and vicissitudes to which I was exposed through the barbarism, anarchy, and desolation of the Asiatic world, will be surprised that I discovered large spots on the highly-praised sun of our modern culture, and saw caricatures where we expected to find noble ideals for the benefit of humanity. Considering many of my earlier views on these matters, I may be accused of precipitancy and inconsistency, but the judgment of mature age easily redeems the errors of youth, and improvement and perfecting are generally the outcome of former mistakes and errors. After these few remarks I will now try to put into words the impressions made upon me by particular instances of our manners and customs, our religious, social, and political life, all of which have given me much food for thought.

## I. RELIGION.

Asia is a religious world *par excellence*. Religion animates all phases and fibres of human existence. It does not confine itself to the relations between Creator and creature, but it also governs political and social life; it penetrates everything; it enters into the most secret thoughts and aspirations of the human mind; it rules the course of the earthly body; it creates laws and orders daily life; it teaches us how to dress, feed, and comport ourselves; also in what manner we must eat, drink, and love—in a word, it is the one all-pervading instrument to secure happiness and to ennoble life. Coming back to Europe after a sojourn of many years under these Asiatic influences, one cannot fail to be struck by the looseness of the religious structure and by the constant efforts made by the State, the Church, and sometimes also by society to strengthen and keep upright the frail, shaky building tottering on its foundation. In Asia this is not necessary. With the exception of the Motazilites and other freethinkers during the first centuries of the Hejira, scepticism and free thought have found no adherents in Islam, and in modern times less than ever. The great masses of the Moham-medans are strictly religious; all discussion in matters of religion is prohibited, except perhaps to the Shiite Mollahs, and highly edifying to me were the hours spent in Ispahan under the plane-

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trees in the garden of Medressei Shah, where I could converse freely and openly with the Persian clerics about the Divine tradition of the Koran, the immortality of the soul, &c., &c. With Moslems of other nationalities the principle *noli me tangere* governs all matters of religion, and when we leave this stronghold of faith and come to Europe, where the struggle between faith and knowledge has been going on for hundreds of years, where Spinoza, Voltaire, Gibbon, Draper, Buckle, and many other modern thinkers have been successfully employed on the demolition of the religious structure; where attempts are made to supplant the worship of God with the worship of humanity; the hypocrisy and dissimulation prevailing in our world must strike us painfully. What Christianity and Judaism give us to behold passes all description. In spite of Strauss and Renan, Büchner and Huxley, millions of Westerners pretend to be either Christians or Jews without even believing that there is a God. The majority of Churchmen are so enlightened by modern science that they, least of all, believe in the doctrines they preach and fight for, and the traveller from Asia to Europe must, perforce, ask himself the question, "Why all this hypocrisy, all this dissimulation? Why this persistent closing of one's eyes against the rays of light which our culture, after a hard struggle with the prevailing darkness, has at last revealed?" This incomprehensible love of pretence has in Europe attained

to such a pass that in certain leading circles hypocrisy, the religious lie and false pretence are held up as a virtue worthy of imitation, and a meritorious example! This perversity, this vice, I might say, is as incomprehensible to the thoughtful mind as it is unworthy of, and humiliating amid, the much vaunted achievements of Western civilisation. In the circles where these despicable notions are tolerated and extolled as worthy of imitation we hear most of the mighty influence exercised by religion upon the social status of humanity, while it is asserted that the world without this moral police could not exist, because society, even in its lowest state—the savage state—could not exist without its fetish and totem.

During my many years' intercourse with people of various religions, living amongst them in the incognito of Catholic, Protestant, Sunnite, Shiite, and for a short time also as Parsi, I have come to the conclusion that religion offers but little security against moral deterioration, and that it is not seemly for the spirit of the twentieth century to take example by the customs and doings of savages. Not only Lombroso, but many other thinkers, have clearly proved that the majority of criminals are religiously disposed, and that, for instance, the robber-murderer in Spain, before setting to his work, offers a prayer to his patron saint, St. James. In Asia I have noticed the same thing. The most cruel and unprincipled Turkoman robbers were

always the first, before setting out on a marauding expedition, to beg from me, the supposed Sheikh, or from some other pious man, a Fatiha (blessing). In the towns of Central Asia, Persia, and Turkey I have found in the thickly-turbaned men of God some of the most consummate villains and criminals, while the plain Osbeg and Osmanli, who only knows religion in its external form, shows himself a man full of generosity and goodness of heart. In all the Islamic world Mecca and Medina are known as the most loathsome pools of wickedness and vice. Theft, murder, and prostitution flourish there most wantonly. I have noticed the same in the large pilgrim haunts, Meshed and Kum, and it is a well-known saying, "He who wants to forsake his Christianity should make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or Rome."

With us in Europe the relation between morality and religion is a similar one, and how it is possible that, in the face of the revealed facts, states and societies give themselves the trouble to discover in religion a panacea against vice and a standard of morality must remain a mystery to any thinking man.

Remarkable and inexplicable it certainly remains why in Western lands, with the prevailing scepticism in the cultured world, far more tolerance or indifference is shown towards the freethinker than towards people who hold different religious views from our own. In Asia the hatred of and



fanaticism against those of another creed are the outcome of strong faith, and since these are fostered and upheld by the Government, antagonistic feelings, though probably deeper rooted, do not express themselves so vehemently or so frequently as with us. Our laws and our notions of decency guard against the outbreak of passion, but they cannot break the power of prejudice even in the breast of the most cultured. When we consider the relations of the Christian West towards the Moslemic East, it will strike us that the sympathies of Europeans, however unprejudiced they may think themselves, when it comes to the political questions of the day will always be more on the side of the Christian than of the Mohammedan subjects of Turkey, although the Mohammedan subjects of the Porte have to suffer more from the despotism of the Government than the Christians under the protection of the Western Powers. The European still looks upon the Mohammedan, Brahmanist, Buddhist, &c., as an inferior being whose faith he ridicules and blackens and whom he could not under any circumstances regard as his equal, and in spite of the protection extended by our laws to those of another creed, the follower of the doctrines of Mohammed, Buddha, and Vishnu feels always uncomfortable, strange, and restricted in Western lands. And the Jews do not fare much better, although they have adopted the language, manners, and customs of the various lands of Europe.



In the history of the Moslemic East, for instance, persecutions and violent outbreaks against the Jews are far less frequent than with us in the West, not merely in the Middle Ages but even in quite modern times. Enlightened Europe, mocking at the fanaticism of Asia, has of late years published, under the title of Anti-Semitism, things against the Jews which defy repetition ; they form one of the darkest stains on the escutcheon of the modern world of culture. Even our most eminent freethinkers, agnostics, and atheists are not without blame in this matter ; and the absurd excuse that the Jews are hated and persecuted not on account of their belief, but on account of their exclusiveness and strongly marked nationality, is ridiculous on the face of it, for all over Europe the Jew adopts the national proclivities of his native land, and often, *plus catholique que le pape*, he shows himself more patriotic than his Christian countryman. In consideration of these facts it is surprising that the Jew, treated as a stranger everywhere in Europe, still persists in ingratiating himself into the national bond. Why does he not accept the fact and simply say, "Since you want none of me I remain Jew, and you can brand me as a cosmopolitan if you like." There is no doubt that this innate prejudice of the Christian world finds its root in those virtues and characteristics which have enabled the Jews to accomplish so much, and which as the natural result of oppression may be seen in all oppressed people. "He who violently

throws down the flaming torch to extinguish it will burn his fingers at the fiercer burning flame," as a German poet pithily remarks. Tyrants generally harm themselves most by their tyranny, and when the ruling Christian world considers itself justified in taking up arms against the professedly more highly gifted, more energetic, and persevering children of the so-called Semitic race, it is grossly mistaken. The Jew in Turkey, Persia, and Central Asia is more purely Semitic, more staunchly religious than his co-religionist in Europe, and yet I do not know any more miserable, helpless, and pitiful individual on God's earth than the *Jahudi* in those countries. Where is the Semitic sharpness, the Semitic energy and perseverance, which the European puts down and fears as dangerous racial characteristics? The poor Jew is despised, belaboured and tortured alike by Moslem, Christian, and Brahmin, he is the poorest of the poor, and outstripped by Armenians, Greeks and Brahmins, who everywhere act the same part which in Europe has fallen to the lot of the Jew for lack of a rival in adversity. I repeat Anti-Semitism in Europe is a vile baseness, which cannot be justified by any religious, ethnical, or social motives, and when the Occident, boasting of its humaneness and love of justice, always tries to put all that is evil and despicable on to poor, starved, depraved Asia, one forgets that with us the sun of a higher civilisation truly has dawned, but is not yet risen high enough

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to illumine the many dark points and gloomy corners in this world of ours.

Why deny it? In my many years' intercourse with the people of both these worlds, religion has not had a beneficial influence upon me. I have found in it nothing to ennoble man, not a main-spring of lofty ideals, and certainly no grounds for classifying and incorporating people according to their profession of faith or rather according to their interpretation and understanding of the great vital question as to the exact manner in which one should grope about in the prevailing darkness. If the division into many nationalities of people belonging to the same race and living under the same sky is an absurdity, how much more foolish is it to be divided on the point of a fanciful interpretation of the inscrutable mystery, and a fruitless groping into the unfathomable problem? The question of nationality will be further discussed presently, and as regards religion I will only add here that the ethical standard of faith, although much higher in Asia than in Europe, can after all have but a problematic influence, and only on intellects whose culture enables them to form high ideals, and to whom, being of a poetic or sentimental or indolent temperament, a roaming in loftier spheres seems a necessity. Beyond this, religion in Asia as in Europe reveals itself in outward show, miracles and mysteries, and where these are absent there is no true religion. Many of the ceremonies, usages,

and superstitions which as an Orthodox Jew I practised in my youth I have discovered again one by one in faithful counterfeit amongst Catholic and Orthodox Christians, Moslems, Fire-worshippers, and Hindus, and nothing to my mind is more ridiculous than the revilings of one religion against another about these childish external things. So, for instance, as a pious Jew, I was always careful on Saturdays not to pass the Ereb, *i.e.*, the line which marks the closer limit of the town, with my wallet full. Overstepping this cordon might be looked upon as a business transaction and a violation of the Sabbath ; with a handkerchief on my loins and my eyes fixed on a bit of twine hanging between two sticks, I ventured, however, to take my walks abroad on the Sabbath day. Many years later I travelled from Samarkand to Herat in company with some Hindustani, who, having transacted some financial business in Bokhara, now with full pouches were returning to their sunny home on the Ganges. These Vishnu-worshippers, with the yellow caste-sign on their brow, used at night at the halting-place to separate themselves from the rest of the caravan. Small sticks about a finger in length were stuck in the ground to form a circle round them with a thin twine stretched from point to point, (for, like the Ereb, this line represented the cordon between them and the world of unbelievers), and behind this imaginary wall they prepared and ate their food without any fear of

its being defiled by the glances of the heathen. As a child I was taught to look with disgust upon swine's flesh, and later, as Mohammedan, I had to feign horror and aversion at the very mention of the word *Khinzir* (swine). In my youth the wine prepared by a Christian was *Nesekh* (forbidden), as a Shiite, notwithstanding my ravenous hunger, I could not touch the food which the hand of a Christian had handled. Not only among Jews and Asiatic religionists, however, but even Christianity, whether in Europe or in Asia, is full of such flagrant superstitions and absurdities which are thrown in the teeth of those of another persuasion. The Abbé Huc tells us in his *Book of Travels*, that once on the borders of Tibet he sought a night's quarter and was directed to the house of a Buddha-maker. This led the French missionary to make some scoffing remark about the manufacturing of gods in Buddhism. I had a similar experience at St. Ulrich's in the Grödnerthal, in strictly Catholic Tyrol, for in my search for a house to put up at in that charmingly situated Alpine place I was directed successively to a Mary-maker, a God-maker, and a Christ-maker, for in this district live the best-known manufacturers of crosses and saints. In the Mohammedan world, knowing that I was acquainted with Europe, I have often been asked whether it was really true that the Franks worshipped a god with a dog's head, practised communism of wives, and such like things. In Tyrol,

on the Achensee, where I lived among the peasants, I was asked if on my many travels I had ever visited the land of the Liberals, where the goat does duty as god, as the anti-Liberal minister had given the simple peasants to understand.

In many other respects the religions of the East and of the West agree in point of degeneracy, and it is incomprehensible how and with what right our missionaries manage to convince the Asiatics of the errors of their faith and to represent Christianity as the only pure and salvation-bringing religion. If our missionaries could point to our Western order and freedom as the fruit of Christianity, their insistence would be somewhat justified, but our modern culture has developed not *through* but *in spite of* Christianity. The fact that Asia in our days is given up as a prey to the rapacity of Europe is not the fault of Islam or Buddhism or Brahminism. The principles of these religions support more than Christianity does the laws of humanity and freedom, the regulations of State and society, but it is the historical development and the climate, the conditions of the soil, and, above all, the tyrannical arbitrariness of their sovereigns which have created the cliffs against which all the efforts of religion promoters must be wrecked.

After all this I need not comment any further upon my own confession of faith, which is contained within the pages of this autobiography. To my thoroughly practical nature one grain of common



sense is of more value than a bushel of theories ; and it has always been trying to me to go into questions the solution of which I hold *à priori* to be impossible, and I have preferably occupied myself with matters of common interest rather than with the problems of creation, the Deity, &c., which our human understanding can never grasp or fathom. I have honoured and respected all religions in so far as they were beneficial and edifying, *i.e.*, in so far as they endeavoured to improve and ennoble mankind ; and when occasion demanded I have always, either out of respect for the laws of the land, or out of courtesy to the society in which I happened to be, formally conformed to the prevailing religion of the land, just as I did in the matter of dress, although it might be irksome at times. In matters of secondary importance, religious and otherwise, I have strictly adhered to the principle, "*Si fueris Romæ romano vivito more*," and to the objections raised by religious moralists to my vacillating in matters of religion I can but reply : A vacillating conviction is, generally speaking, no conviction at all, and he who possesses nothing has nothing to exchange. Nothing to me is more disgusting than the holy wrath with which hypocrisy in Europe censures and condemns a change of religion based on want of conviction. Are the clergy, pastors, and modernised rabbis so fully convinced of the soundness of the dogmas they hold, and do they really believe that their distor-



tions of face, their pious pathos and false enthusiasm can deceive cultured people of the twentieth century? When certain Europeans in their antiquated conservatism still carry high the banner of religious hypocrisy, and although possessing a good pair of legs prefer to go about on the crutches of Holy Scripture, we have no occasion to envy them their choice. The idea of carrying the lie with me to the grave seems to me horrible. The intellectual acquisitions of our century can no longer away with the religion of obscure antiquity ; knowledge, enlightenment, and free inquiry have made little Europe mistress of the world, and I cannot see what advantage there can be in wilfully denying this fact, and why, in the education of the young, we do not discard the stupefying system of religious doctrine and cultivate the clear light of intellectual culture. Those who have lived among many phases of religion, and have been on intimate terms with the adherents of Asiatic and European creeds, are puzzled to see the faint-heartedness and indecision of the Western world ; and if there be anything that has astonished me in Europe, it is this everlasting groping and fumbling about in matters of religion and the constant dread lest the truth, acknowledged by all thinking men, should gain the victory. For governing and ruling the masses religion may perhaps remain for some time to come a convenient and useful instrument, but in the face of the progress in all regions of modern knowledge and thought it becomes ever clearer and

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more evident that this game of hide-and-seek cannot go on very much longer. The spirit of the twentieth century cries, "Let there be light!" The light must and shall come!

## 2. NATIONALITY.

Frail and brittle as is the foundation of the partition wall dividing the religions of Europe, the same may be said of the boundaries of nationalities which separate people into various corporations. If nationality were a question of common origin, based on consanguinity, *i.e.*, on natural proclivities, there would be nothing to say against the idea of unity and cohesiveness. Mankind would be divided into different families separated by certain conspicuous racial characteristics; such separation, based on natural causes, would be quite justifiable. But in the various nationalities, as we now see them in Europe, there is not a symptom of any such idea; their ethnical origin lies in obscurity. These nations are an agglomeration of the greatest possible mixture of kindred and foreign elements, and, according to the longer or shorter process of development, it is at most their common language, customs, and history which constitute the so-called national stamp. If we observe a little more closely the European nations of our time we shall find that the older the influence of culture the sooner the national crystallisation of such a country began, and consequently is still in process in the later-

developed Eastern portion of Europe. The French are a mixture of Iberians, Ligurians or Gauls, Kelts, and eventually also Phœnicians, and the German Franks, who found this ethnical conglomeration in ancient Gaul and gave it the present national name. In the German national corporation there are many nationalities whose German origin is by no means proved. A large portion of Eastern Germany was Slavonic; Berlin, Leipsic, Dresden, Chemnitz, &c., point to a Slavonic origin, and the oldest inhabitants of Steiermark, Kärnten, and the Eastern Tyrol were Slavs. In Italy we find a most curious mixture of Etruscans, Latins, Greeks, Slavs, Arabs, and Germans, which in course of time Church and State have amalgamated and impressed with the stamp of linguistic unity, although the typical features of the various fragments are not obliterated even now. In Hungary Ural-Altaic fragments have mixed with Slavs and other Aryans, and in spite of numerical minority the Magyar element, through its warlike propensities, has for centuries maintained the upper hand and gradually absorbed the foreign elements. The real ground-element of the Magyar nation, however, it would be almost impossible to discover.

The strongly mixed character of the English people is universally known, and when we look a little more closely at the gigantic Russian Empire we shall find that in the small nucleus of the Slavonic provinces, Tartars, Bashkirs, Kirghiz,

Buriats, Votiaks, Cheremiss, Suryanes, Shuvashes, Greeks, Ostiaks, Voguls, Caucasians, &c., have been swallowed up. The growth of the Russian nation is of comparatively modern date and still in process. At the time of Peter the Great the entire population of Russia was estimated at thirty millions; *now* the number of Russians alone is over eighty millions.

And now I ask, in the face of all the above difficulties, can there be a question of consanguinity in the various nationalities, and what is there to insure a feeling of brotherly fellowship? Those who argue in favour of this point bring forward the national peculiarities, the outcome of their common language, customs, and historical antecedents, all of them psychical causes, and nationality is represented as a moral and not as a material conception. Very well, we will accept this, only let us remember that language, like all other psychical things, is subject to changes, and we must not be astonished if Islam, ignoring all former national restrictions, seeks to classify the human race only according to profession of faith, and has advanced the thesis, "All true believers are brothers." In the Mohammedan organisation the various shades of nationality practically do not exist, in obedience to the maxim: "*Hubb ul watan min el iman.*" Patriotism proceeds from religion; at any rate they are always of secondary importance. When Islam, inspired by such lofty ideas,

can accomplish this, why cannot we, under the powerful protection of our modern culture, produce some equivalent in our Western lands, and, putting aside national restrictions, create a cultural bond and united corporation, excluding all national hatred and discord? This indeed would be one of the most ideal forms of national life, and its realisation in the distant future is not at all an impossibility. But as yet, alas! we have not reached this exalted station of peace and happiness. Behold in our cultured West the uninterrupted struggle of great and mighty nationalities against smaller and weaker ones—a struggle in which Darwin's theory of the "survival of the fittest" is fully justified. No one likes to act the part of the weaker, doomed to destruction; none wants to be absorbed by others, and the inferior in numbers have to defend their claim for existence as a political nation upon historical grounds. It is the rapacity and the tyranny of the great nations which have called forth and justify the fight for existence in the smaller ones, for why should not all want to preserve their individuality, all want to be entirely free in promoting the intellectual and material development of their own commonwealth? And this being so, there can, for the present, be no question of cosmopolitan tendencies. This fact becomes more conspicuous where it concerns a small ethnical island surrounded by the wild waves of a mighty ethnical sea, which threaten to destroy it, as we see

exemplified in Hungary. Encompassed by German, Slav, and Roman elements, it has for centuries skilfully and successfully held its own, and the preservation of its national independence is an absolute necessity, as otherwise a collision between the three large national bodies just mentioned would be unavoidable, and the existence of a buffer-state must therefore be hailed as a fortunate coincidence. All lovers of peace and of quiet expansion of Western culture in the East must hail with joy the buffer afforded by the Hungarian State, and all true friends of culture must heartily desire the growth of Hungary. In this spirit I have always preserved my Hungarian patriotism, and will do so to the end of my days, although for many decades of years I have occupied myself with questions of universal interest, and have kept aloof from home politics. It is not surprising that the patriotism of a cosmopolitan differs considerably from that of his stay-at-home compatriots. But the keen interest in the affairs of the various nations with whom the traveller comes into contact hardly ever succeeds in suppressing or weakening in him his warmer feelings for the weal and woe of his native land. The tears I have shed in my younger days over the cruel sufferings and mortifications inflicted upon my native land by Austria's absolutism would have promoted a more luxurious growth of the plant of patriotism, if I had always remained at home and had had intercourse with Hungarians



only. But even when one's horizon has widened one may still cling lovingly to one's native sod. One does not so lightly agree with Tolstoy, who maintains that patriotism is a crime, for although there are proverbs such as "*Ubi bene ibi patria*," or its English equivalent, "If you happen to be born in a stable, it does not follow that you are a horse," the cosmopolitan, be he ever so infatuated, always in the end is glad to get home again.

If there be anything likely to weaken or shake one's patriotism, it is the narrow-mindedness and ridiculous prejudice of the Christian West against its fellow-countrymen of a different creed. I will take my own case as example. I was all ablaze with enthusiasm when in my childhood I became acquainted with the life of the national heroes of Hungary. The heroic epoch of 1848 filled my youthful heart with genuine pride, and even later in 1861, when I returned from Constantinople by the Danube boat, on landing at Mohacs I fell on my knees and kissed the ground with tears of true patriotic devotion in my eyes. I was intensely happy and in a rapture of delight, but had soon to realise that many, nay most people questioned the genuineness of my Hungarianism. They criticised and made fun of me, because, they said, people of Jewish origin cannot be Hungarians, they can only be Jews and nothing else. I pointed to the circumstance that in matters of faith, like most cultured people, I was really an agnostic and had long since left the precincts of Judaism.



I spoke of the dangers I had faced in order to investigate the early history of Hungary, surely a test of patriotism such as but few would be able to show. Many other arguments I brought forward, but all in vain ; everywhere and on all occasions an ominous sneer, an insidious shrug of the shoulders, an icy indifference, or a silence which has a more deadly effect than any amount of talk. Add to this the deep and painful wound inflicted by the adverse criticism at home upon me and my travels, and I would ask the reader, Could I under these conditions persist in my national enthusiasm, could I stand up to defend Hungarian patriotism with the same ardent love of youth when as yet I had no anticipation of what was to happen to me? Even the most furious nationalist could not easily answer this question in the affirmative. Not his Jewish descent, but the prejudiced, unreasonable, and illiberal Christian world is to blame when the man of Jewish origin becomes cosmopolitan ; and I am not sure whether those Jews who, in spite of the blunt refusals they receive, persist in pushing themselves within the national framework must be admired as martyrs or despised as intruders. The law, at all events, makes no difference, but usage and social convenience do not trouble themselves much about the law ; and in this all European countries are alike, with the exception of England, where liberalism is not an empty term, where the Jew feels thoroughly English and is looked upon as

such by the true Briton. I frankly admit that the weakening and ultimate loss of this warm national feeling deprives us of one of the most noble sentiments of humanity; for, with all its weakness and prejudices, the bond of national unity possesses always a certain charm and attraction; and through all the painful experiences of my life, the thought that the short-sightedness of society could not deprive me of my national right to the soil of my birth has comforted and cheered me. The land where I saw the light of day, where my cradle stood, and where I spent the golden days of childhood, is, and ever remains my Fatherland. It is my native soil, its weal and woe lie close to my heart, and I have always been delighted when in some way or other I could help a Hungarian.

### 3. SOCIETY.

If my ideas about religion and nationality are at variance with the prevailing notions in Western lands, this is still more the case with regard to our social standing. The European who has been in Asia for some length of time feels freer and less restricted there than in Europe, in spite of the anarchy, barbarism, and tyranny prevailing in the East. In the first place, as stranger and guest he has less to suffer from the despotism of the Government and the oppressive national customs. He stands under the protection of the dreaded West and is not subject to the laws of the land. He lives

as an outlaw truly, and has to look after himself, but then he has the advantage of not being bound by any party spirit; no class prejudice exists here. In the East the highest in the land has to condescend to his inferiors, even princes are not exempt from this law, which is in accordance with the patriarchal spirit of the Government. I have witnessed simple peasants rebuking their landlord, without the latter daring to say a word of protest. With us in Europe the tax-paid official behaves not as the servant but the master of the public, and his arrogance is often very offensive. But still more objectionable is the conduct of the uneducated born aristocrats, who, on the strength of the problematic services of their forefathers, often without the least personal merit, exhibit an amount of pride as if the course of the universe depended upon them. I have never quite been able to understand why the born aristocrat should claim this exceptional position, which nowadays is not so much a matter of national law as of public opinion. If these privileges are a recognition and reward for services rendered, and to be continued from generation to generation, the harm done to society is incalculable, for the offspring only very seldom possess the intellectual heirloom of their ancestors, very seldom come up to the position they occupy, and moreover stand in the way of those better fitted to fill it. Of course in opposition to these views the succession theory is advanced, and in my dis-

cussions on this point I have often been met with the argument that as in the vegetable and animal kingdom there are superior species, this natural law also applies to the human race. The maxim, "*Fortes creatur fortibus*," is quoted, but one forgets that human strength, thanks to the advanced spirit of the age, consists now no longer in physical but in psychical qualities, and that greatness and perfection of intellectual power can be obtained only by study, zeal, and persevering intellectual labour—not exactly a favourite pastime of the born aristocrat, generally speaking. *Vir non nascitur sed fit*, says the old proverb ; and although admitting advantages of birth in horses, dogs and other quadrupeds, we cannot do the same for the human race of the twentieth century.

What has been accomplished so far in literature, art, science and intellectual advancement generally is for the greater part the work of people not favoured by birth, but who in the hard struggle for existence have steeled their nerves and sharpened their wits. In the dark ages of crude thought, when the greatest amount of hereditary physical strength displayed in plundering, murdering and pillaging bore away the palm, there was some sense in hereditary aristocracy, but in modern times privileges of birth are nonsense, and where they do exist they are a disgrace to humanity, and a melancholy sign of the tardiness of society in certain countries. Curiously enough, even in our

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days people try to justify the existence of hereditary nobility by referring to the historical development of certain States. For instance, the decay and retrogression of Asiatic nations is attributed to the lack of an hereditary aristocracy, and Japan is quoted as an example of the mighty influence of inherited nobility. But the example is not to the point. The fact that Japan, in spite of the great natural endowments of its people, was up to the middle of the nineteenth century closed against all influences from the West, is due solely and entirely to the strictly feudal system of the land; and any one studying the struggle between the Daimos and Mikado-ism will perceive that in this Albion of the Far East modern civilisation and the elevation of the State have been introduced against the will and in spite of the nobility. If pedigreed nobility is really so essential to the well-being of a State, how can we account for the lamentable decay of Persia, where there has always been such a strongly pronounced aristocracy?

Holding such views it is only natural that I could never quite fit into the frame of Hungarian society, where aristocratic predilections predominate. In the springtime of 1848 the Hungarian Parliament, infected by the prevailing spirit of the age, did indeed abolish the rights of hereditary nobility, and, as was supposed, quite voluntarily. But as the middle class element has always been feebly represented in Hungary, and consequently public opinion

never could exercise much persuasive force, this law is little more than a show-piece, and has never been really effective. As in the Middle Ages the tone-giving elements were looked upon as the real representatives of the Hungarian race in the motley chaos of nationalities, and therefore *ipso facto* belonged to the nobility, so it is now the social tendency of the country to look upon genuine Hungarian descent as an undeniable sign of nobility, and since the Government takes no measures to put a stop to the mischief—in fact, is not particularly chary in the grant of letters of nobility—every one who possibly can do so tries to prove his genuine unadulterated Hungarian descent by procuring a letter of nobility. This tendency, far from being a healthy sign, reminds one forcibly of a return to mediæval ways ; it nips in the bud all notions of freedom ; it cannot be to the benefit of our beautiful land and our gifted nation ; it cannot help forward its healthy development, that much at least is clear as the day. Just as in the natural law a body cannot find a solid basis on a pointed but only on a flat surface, so also the peace, safety, and well-being of a State can not be securely founded on the heads of society but on the broad basis of the people. The present tendency of Hungarian society is, therefore, not at all to my liking. However, as autobiographer, I will not enter into any social-political discussions, but I cannot help saying that I, the self-made man,



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could not possibly live in close communion with such a society. He who has fought the hard fight and, *per aspera ad astra*, has endeavoured to succeed, does not find satisfaction for his ambition in a closer union with a caste which has long since lost its original significance. *Altiora peto!* And this worthier and higher recognition we are all entitled to claim, when we are conscious of having rendered ever so slight a service to our fellowmen and have contributed ever so little to the intellectual or material well-being of our country or of humanity in general. The chase after orders and decorations, the natural outcome of this aristocratic tendency, although quite the fashion not only in Hungary but in other countries of Europe as well, has never been my ambition either. If sovereigns were pleased to confer such distinctions upon me I have respectfully locked them up in my box, because a public refusal of them seemed to me making a useless parade of democracy, and because no one is entitled to respond to a courtesy with rudeness. I have never been able to understand how certain men, grown old in wisdom and experience, can find pleasure in bedizenning themselves from head to toe with decorations and parading their titles. One calls it apologetically, "The vanity of scholars." But the learned should not commit themselves to such childish, ridiculous weakness. Official distinctions are very much like a command on the part of the State, "Honour this man!" which is quite super-



fluous, for he who is really worthy of honour will be honoured without any such authoritative command. But enough of this ; all these and many other social peculiarities both at home and abroad have never had any attraction for me. To respect a man according to the length of his pedigree, or to honour him according to the superiority of his official dignity, is a thing beyond the capacity of the self-made man. Only the prerogatives of mind and heart command respect, they only are genuine, for they are not dependent on the whim or favour of others, but are based on character or honest labour.

It should also be noted that in Hungary society is far more absorbed in politics than is generally the case, and that science and intellectual labour of any kind are of secondary importance. From the point of view of utility my countrymen are perfectly right, for Hungary, in spite of its glorious past as an independent State, has a hard battle to fight with its neighbour, Austria ; and since it is necessary for a nation to establish itself politically before it can take part in the labour of improving mankind at large, it is very natural that the mind of the nation should be set on political matters, and politics be looked upon as an eminently national question. But apart from this I could never get on with my literary studies at home because my favourite subject, the practical knowledge of the East, never excited much interest in Hungary. What does Hungary care about the

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rivalry between England and Russia in Central Asia, and what possible benefit can it derive from the literary, historical, and ethnographical details of inner Asiatic nations? Whatever my labours have yielded of interest in regard to the primitive history of Hungary, I have given to the public ; but as the greater part of my literary activity was the result of my practical knowledge of Asia, the products of my pen have received far more notice outside of Hungary than at home. I have often been asked why as Hungarian by birth I did not confine myself exclusively to Hungarian topics, and why I entered the region of international literature? At home also I have often been blamed for this, but my critics seemed to forget that my preparatory and my later studies were international in themselves, and that with the best will in the world I could not have confined myself to purely national interests. And so it came about that mentally I remained a stranger in my native land, and in the isolation of the subject of my studies I lived for years confined to my own society, without any intellectual intercourse, without any interchange of ideas, without recognition ! It was not an enviable position. I was a stranger in the place where I had passed my youth ; a stranger in Turkey, Persia and Central Asia ; as a stranger I made my *début* in England, and a stranger I remained in my own home ; and all this because a singular fate and certain natural propensities forced me to follow a career which, because

of its uncommonness, put me into an exceptional position. Had I persevered in the stereotyped paths of Orientalism, *i.e.*, had I been able to give my mind exclusively to the ferreting out of grammatical niceties, and to inquiring into the speculations of theoretical explorers, I could have grown my Oriental cabbages in peace in the quiet rut of my professional predecessors. But how can one expect that a man who as Dervish, without a farthing in his pocket, has cut his way through the whole of the Islam world, who on the strength of his eminently practical nature has accommodated himself to so many different situations, and at last has been forced by circumstances to take a sober, matter-of-fact view of life—how can one expect such a man to bury himself in theoretical ideas, and to give himself up to idealistic speculations? A bookworm I could never be! When I was young, and fancy carried me away into higher spheres, I could derive a certain amount of pleasure from abstract questions, but in after years, when the bitter gravity of life forced me to take a realistic view of things, I preferably chose that region of literature where not merely laurels, but also tangible fruits, were to be found. I took into consideration that in the face of the expected opening up of Asia, and the animated interest of our world in the occurrences of the East, the discussion of the practical questions of the day would be more to the purpose, more likely to attract attention, and to be appreciated by the

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world at large than the theoretical investigation of past events, however significant in themselves. This is the reason why at an early date, without giving up my linguistic studies, I devoted myself to Asiatic politics.

Orthodox and narrow-minded philologists may object to this divergence from the trodden path, but I say, "*Chacun à son gout*," and every man has a perfect right to exert himself in the direction best suited to his tastes and his necessities. To me it was of the greatest moment not only to gain experience and fame, but above all, independence. I have never quite understood why the desire to become independent through the acquisition of earthly goods should be so objectionable in a scholar, for surely independence is the first requirement of human existence.

Strictly adhering to the principle, "*Nulla dies sine linea*," my pen has in the end procured me the material means for loosening the bonds in which the poor writer had languished for so many years. Sixty years had to pass over my head before I could declare, "Now at last I am free from all material care, henceforth no Government, no princely favour, no human whim, can check my thoughts." For the pursuit after filthy lucre, however humiliating and despicable it may appear, is, and ever has been, a cruel necessity, indispensable to the attainment of even the loftiest, noblest ideals. I cannot explain how or why, but in my inmost mind, in every fibre

of my nature, I have always been a passionate, fanatical supporter of independent ideas. An English writer, Sidney Whitman, says that this passion is an outcome of my Jewish origin, because the Jews have always been conspicuous for their notions of independence. Possibly ; but I attribute it in my case rather to the oppression, the ignominy, the insults to which I was exposed in my youth. Nor did I fare much better in after years. Everywhere and always I have had much to suffer from poverty, social prejudice, and the tyranny of Governments ; and when at last, having overcome all, I attained to intellectual and material independence, I felt supremely happy in the enjoyment of my dearly bought liberty, and in this enjoyment found the only worthy reward for the hard struggle of my life. I have made no concealment of my views as to the prejudices, the weaknesses, the obscurantism, and the ignorance of society, and I did not care when on account of my views about religion, nationality, aristocracy, &c., so contrary to the generally conceived notions, I was looked upon as eccentric, extravagant, sometimes even as not quite in my right mind. I held, and ever will hold, to my principles, purified in the hard struggle for existence. And if the struggle for my material wants is at an end the mental struggle goes on always, and will probably continue to the last breath of my life.

“ The Struggle's End, and yet no End.” Thus I

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have entitled this last portion of my autobiography. And I am not sorry that it should be so, for what would life be worth without struggle, especially for those who from their earliest youth to their old age have trodden the rough paths of life, and been accustomed to fight hard for the smallest ray of sunshine on their work. Yet after all I must honestly confess that there is more pleasure in the actual strain and effort than in the final accomplishment. Amid the pangs of hunger and all the sad circumstances of my adventurous life, work has been my only comfort, hope, and solace ; it always came to my rescue, and I owe to it all that I have accomplished in this world. In this full assurance I have gladly sacrificed all pleasures, both private and social, for the sake of work. In spite of my joviality I was never a society man—I mean, cared for drawing-room life or for the social evenings of scholars and writers—because I found that in the former mostly frivolous, useless matters were discussed, and in the latter with much instructive and intellectual conversation, spirituous drinks—which I have always abominated—play an important part. Only very rarely have I visited the theatre, for when I was young I should have liked to go, but had not the means, and as I advanced in years the theatre lost its attraction for me, and being an early riser, I made it a rule to go to bed at nine o'clock. Generally speaking, I kept the question of utility in the foreground, and if a thing did not commend



itself as particularly profitable or beneficial, I left it alone. In this manner and with these views of life I have finished a somewhat fantastic career. I have often been asked whether from the very first I worked with some particular purpose in view whether the certain hope of success bore me along, or whether I was surprised at the final result. To those really interested in my destiny I reply as follows: At first naturally the instinct of self-preservation urged me on, for with an empty stomach one may be able to indulge in dreams, but one cannot work. The world's literatures, read in their respective languages, were a great delight to me, but with an empty stomach and teeth chattering with cold the desire for intellectual food is soon subdued by a longing for physical nourishment and a warm corner. In course of time all this was changed. As I was able to satisfy my material wants, in that same measure the desire for knowledge increased, and ambition grew with it. To outstrip my fellow-labourers with a higher degree of knowledge, to make myself prominent by certain intellectual qualities, to pose as an authority, and by some special accomplishment to excite the admiration and the applause of the public—all this led me into the devil's clutches. For years I wildly pursued this course with feverish restlessness, and during this time fell my incognito life in Stambul, my dangerous journey to Samarkand, and my *début* in England and the rest of Europe.



One may well say, "Surely such varied and unexpected results made you pause for a moment, surely you stopped to reflect and to ask yourself the question, 'What will all this lead to?'" No, I never stopped to think. One by one the different phases of my almost romantic career were left behind; the poor Jew boy became a European celebrity; but I cared not. Forward, ever forward, for ambition is insatiable; it leaves one no time for reflection, nor is retrospection one of its favourite pastimes; it is not the past, but the future, which occupies all our thoughts. With such ideas in my mind, my sojourn on the shores of the beautiful Danube was of necessity only in appearance a *buen retiro*, but certainly no *otium cum dignitate*. Apart from my studies, which occupied several hours a day, my active pen, often against my will, brought me in contact with the most distant regions of the globe. I kept up a lively correspondence with people of various rank and degree in Turkey, Persia, Central Asia, India, China, Japan, America, and Australia; and were I to mention the different occasions which called forth this interchange of letters, it would give a true and amusing picture of the joys and the sufferings of a literary worker. Sometimes it was a Japanese politician who urged me on to have a dig at Russia, pointing out the common danger which threatened both Hungary and Japan if Russia's power were allowed free growth. Then, again, a malcontent Hindustani

blamed me for having taken the British tyrant under my wing ; while another Hindustani praised me for duly acknowledging the spirit of liberty and justice which animated the Raj, *i.e.*, the English Government. A Persian who has read in the diary of his sovereign about my personal relations with the king, asks me for my recommendation and protection, and while one Turk showers praise upon me for my Turcophile writings, another Turk insults me for having accepted the hospitality of the hated Sultan Abdul Hamid. A Tartar from Yalta, who addresses me as the opponent of Russia and the student of Moslem dithyrambs, begs for a copy of my *Sheibaniade*, as he has not the means to buy one. So it goes on day after day, but worst of all the poor international writer fares at the hands of the Americans. The number of autograph collectors is astonishing, and many are kind enough to enclose an American stamp or a few cents for the reply postage. And then the questions I am asked ! Could I inform them of the hour of my birth, in order to account for my adventurous career ? And I do not even know what year I was born ! An American surgeon asks me to send him a photograph of my tongue, that from its formation he may draw his conclusions as to my linguistic talent, and so on, and so on. As most of these letters have to be answered, one may readily imagine the amount of time and patience this often awkward correspondence absorbs, and it is more in

after life that this side of international authorship becomes such a nuisance.

This reverse side of the medal one has to put up with, however; it supplies some bright interludes also. Questions referring to my motley career require more careful consideration. Many of my friends and acquaintances have been curious to know how I bore the enormous difference between my present position and the naked misery of my childhood, and whether, generally speaking, I often thought of all my past sufferings and struggles. Well, to tell the truth, the recollections of the past form the sweetest moments of my life. It is quite like a novel when I think of the beginning of my career and then look at the end, but as the transformation has been a gradual and slow progress, and as I have never doubted the intimate connection between labour and wages, the steady progress from worse to better has but seemed natural to me, and the really wonderful part in it was the disposition of a kind destiny. "*Labor omnia vincit*" has always been my device, not forgetting the other saying, "*Sors bona, nihil aliud*"; for that on my journey through the Steppes I did not die of thirst, that I was able to undergo the fatigues of those long marches on foot through the deep sand with lame legs, and that I escaped the executioner's axe of the tyrants of Khiva and Bokhara, I attribute solely to my lucky star. Without this star all my perseverance, patience, ambition, linguistic talent,

and intellectual activity would have been fruitless. But as concerns the recollection of those past sufferings and struggles I must honestly say that a retrospective glance has always given me the greatest pleasure ; the more so where, as in my case, I have both mentally and physically an unbroken view of my past career. In spite of the seventy years which have gone over my head, I feel physically perfectly composed and in good health, and without complaining with Sadi that :—

“Medjlis tamam shud ve b'akhir resid umr,”

*i.e.*, “the measure of my years is full, and only now fortune begins to smile.” I have in the prime of my life enjoyed to the full all the spiritual and worldly pleasures of existence. If there be anything which makes the approaching evening of one's life empty and unpleasant it is the grief henceforth no longer to be fit for work and labour. The desire to overcome the unconquerable is gone ; the beautiful delusive pictures on the rosy horizon of the future have disappeared ; henceforth it is the past only which offers me the cup of precious, sweet delight. No wonder, then, that I can spend hours by myself in pleasant retrospection, enjoying the visions of my brain. I see myself as the schoolboy of Duna Szerdahely, hurrying along towards the Jewish school, leaning on my crutch and warming my half-numbed fingers on frosty winter mornings

with the hot potatoes which I carried in my pocket for breakfast. Again I see myself laden with distinctions at the royal table in the palace of Windsor or Yildiz ; dining from massive golden plates, and honoured by the highest representatives of Western and Eastern society. Then there arises before my mind the picture of my miserable plight as mendicant student spending the cold autumn night under the seat on the promenade at Presburg, and trembling with cold and fear ; and scarcely has this gloomy picture faded from my view when I behold in its place the meeting-hall in London where the heads of England's proud aristocracy listen to my speech on the political condition of affairs in Central Asia, and loudly applaud. Seated all alone in my lonely room I see myself once more in the turmoil of life, and gazing in the richly-coloured kaleidoscope I am now intoxicated with bliss, then again trembling with fear. In clear outline, in the smallest details I enjoy those blissful moments of delivery from terrible distress, the threatening danger of lifelong slavery, or a martyr's awful death, which so often have stared me in the face. Whenever the scene of my audience with the Emir of Bokhara, or of the agonies of thirst in the Khalata desert, and the terrible image of Kulkhan, the Turcoman slave-dealer, come before me in my dreams, even to this day I look anxiously round and rejoice when I find that it is only a dream and not reality.

Fate has truly played me many queer tricks. And now, in the evening of my life, looking back upon the dark and the bright moments of my long career, I say with the English that my life has been "a life worth living," and would gladly go through the whole comedy again from beginning to end, and for a second time undergo all the labour, the fatigues, the mortal dangers. . . . So mighty and overpowering is the thirst for adventure in one's youth, and the consciousness of a fortunate escape from threatening danger is so deliciously exciting, that even in one's old age one can gloat over the recollection of it.

Once having tasted the charms of a life of adventure, the longing for it will ever remain, and a calm sea never seems as beautiful and sublime as the furiously whipped waves of a stormy ocean. There are natures not made for rest, they need perpetual motion and excitement to keep them happy. I belong to this latter category. I never did care for a quiet, peaceful existence, and I am glad to have possessed these qualities, for through them I have gained the two most precious jewels of human life—experience and independence—two treasures inseparably connected, and forming the true nucleus of human happiness. And now the evening of my life has come; the setting sun is casting warning shadows before me, and the chilliness of the approaching night becomes perceptible,



I sit and think of all the dangers, difficulties, and troubles of the day that it is past and in the possession of my two jewels I feel fully rewarded for all I have gone through. It has been my good fortune to contribute my mite to the enlightenment and improvement of my fellow-creatures ; and when I made the joyful discovery that my books were being read all over Europe, America, and Australia, the consciousness of not having lived in vain filled me with a great happiness. I thought to myself, the father professor of the gymnasium at St. Georghen was wrong after all when he said, "Moshele, why dost thou study? It would be better for thee to be a butcher!" But more precious than all these good things is my dearly-bought experience.

My eye is still undimmed and my memory still clear, and even as in past years, so now two worlds with all their different countries, peoples, cities, morals, and customs rise up before my eyes. As the bee flies from one flower to another, so my thoughts wander from Europe to Asia and back again ; everywhere I feel at home ; from all sides well-known faces smile recognition ; all sorts of people talk to me in their mother-tongue. Thus encompassing the wide world, feasting one's eyes on the most varied scenery—this, indeed, is a delight reserved for travellers only, for travelling is decidedly the greatest and noblest enjoyment in all the world. And so I have no reason to complain



of my lot, for if my life was hard the reward was abundant also, and now at the end of it I can be fully satisfied with the result of my struggles.

## Appendices



## APPENDIX I

### EUROPEAN AND ASIATIC ECHOES OF MY INCOGNITO TRAVELS

IN spite of all the slights I had to put up with, the first years after my return from Asia passed very pleasantly in beautiful Budapest. It gave me keen pleasure to see my books about my travels, and my ethnographical and political essays before me, in various European and Asiatic languages; and the voice of criticism, whether favourable or otherwise, had ceased to trouble me. But one thing was of special interest to me, viz., the effect which the reports of my travels would have in the Far East—that is, in Central Asia—for I felt sure that the news of the happy conclusion of my incognito would reach the borders of the Zerefshan, by way of India, or of Russia. That I was not mistaken in my supposition was proved by news received in later years from that neighbourhood. The first information came from the Russian diplomatist, Herr von Lankenau, who, shortly after the victory of the Russian arms at Samarkand, was sent by General Kauffmann to Bokhara to negotiate with the Emir, Mozaffareddin. Herr von Lankenau settled the principal conditions of the peace between Russia and Bokhara, and then spent some time in the Khanate near the Zerefshan.

He had also been an eye-witness of the events that had taken place there, including the revolt of the Crown Prince of Bokhara, Kette Töre, who was overcome in 1869; and four years later, when he returned to Germany, he published some of his experiences in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of June, 1872, entitled, *Rachmed Inak, Moral Pictures from Central Asia; from the Russian of H. von Lankenau*. In No. 11 of the above-named paper we read the following: "In the whole of the Khanate he

(viz., Rachmed Inak) was the only person not deceived by the disguise of the foolhardy Vambéry. This traveller says that when he presented himself before Rachmed, who was then managing the affairs of the whole of Bokhara, in the absence of the Emir, he could not look that sharp-sighted governor in the eyes without fear and trembling, knowing that his secret was either discovered or in danger of discovery. When we once asked Rachmed Inak (a title bestowed on him later) if he remembered a pious pilgrim Hadji, with a very dark face, and lame, who had gone to Bokhara and Samarkand five years before, he replied, smiling, 'Although many pilgrims go to those holy places every year, I can guess which one you mean. He was a very learned Hadji, much more so than all the other wise men in Bokhara.'

"We now told him that the pilgrim was a European, and showed him Vambéry's book, translating to him the part in which the noted traveller speaks of Rachmed himself.

"'I was quite aware of the fact,' answered Rachmed, 'but I knew too that he was not dangerous, and I did not want to ruin such a learned man. It was the Mollahs' own fault that they did not guess whom they had with them. Who told them to keep their eyes and ears shut?'"

Now this Rachmed (more correctly Rahmet), whom I mentioned before (see page 207), appears to have risen in rank since my departure from Central Asia, for Herr von Lankenau speaks of him as "Bek" (governor) of Saadin, a district in the Khanate of Bokhara. I find it quite natural that he should have remembered me, but his statement that he spared my life on account of my erudition must be taken *cum grano salis*. I do not wish to affirm that I was not suspected by a good many; the number of efforts made to unmask me prove the contrary; but no one really detected me on account of my fortunate talent for languages, just as in Turkey and Persia I was hardly ever taken for a European. Had the people of Bokhara discovered my identity I should certainly not now be in a position to write my memoirs!

Many years later, in 1882, I received the second piece of information as to the effect of my incognito on the inhabitants of Central Asia, through the publications of Mr. Edmund

O'Donovan, a correspondent of the *Daily News*, who travelled in Asia from 1879 to 1881, and after his return to England published in 1882 a book of two volumes, entitled, *The Merv Oasis: Travels and Adventures East of the Caspian during the Years 1879 to 1881, including Five Months' Residence among the Tekkes of Merv*.

In the first volume of this book, on page 221, we find the following: "I usually confined myself to my dwelling" (the author is speaking of his stay among the Yomuts in Gömushtepe, where I myself had been), "making notes or conversing with the numerous visitors who invaded Durdi's residence. This was the same in which Vambéry had lived, for, notwithstanding that he succeeded in passing through unrecognised, as a European, the inhabitants afterwards learned his true character, doubtless from the Russians of the naval station at Ashurada close by. I heard of the famous Hungarian from a person named Kan Djan Kelte, the son of Kocsak, his former host. He described the traveller as being like Timsur Lenk, the great Central Asian conqueror, *i.e.*, somewhat lame. Of course this knowledge of Vambéry was not arrived at until some time after his departure from among the Yomuts, as otherwise it might have fared badly with him, and he certainly would not at that time have been allowed to pass on. The most singular fact in connection with this matter was, that when I asked for the date of Vambéry's arrival at Gömushtepe my informer could give me only a very vague reply. This is characteristic of the Turkomans."

Of course this notice by the English traveller interested me very much. Kan Djan (the Khandjan mentioned in my book) had not the slightest idea of my disguise. He and the other Turkomans imagined me to be a genuine, pious, and inspired Osmanli from Constantinople, from whom many people begged letters of introduction to the Ottoman Embassy at Teheran, letters which I willingly gave. Two of them were given back to me after my return, by Haidar Effendi, then ambassador at the Persian Court, and I treasure them as valuable mementos.

There is no doubt there would have been little hope for me had my identity been discovered, and I learned later from pilgrims who stopped at Khandjan how vexed the Turkomans

were at being cheated out of such a windfall. But they were certainly much mistaken, for though the Shah, at the instance of the Emperor Napoleon III., had to pay 12,000 ducats ransom for Monsieur de Bloqueville, who was captured at Merv while in the Persian service, no one would have paid a penny for my ransom ; and as, on account of my infirmity, I was useless for the slave market, a strong ass being worth more than a lame Hadji, it would not have been worth while to capture me.

Quite recently I heard of the third effect of my incognito in Afghanistan, and I must own I was not a little astonished. Readers of my book about my travels may remember that I had a strange adventure in Herat, when the governor of the province, Prince Yakub Khan, a son of Shir Ali Khan, then Emir of Afghanistan, who had already seen many Englishmen, distinguished my European features from those of all my Tartar companions, and tried to unmask me. That he should have found me out has always been a marvel to me, for in the poor student, in whose eyes only hunger and misery were visible, there was really very little to show European origin.

Now the mystery has been solved. Yakub Khan, who succeeded to his father's throne after so many vicissitudes, was so unfortunate that at the very beginning of his reign the English ambassador, Sir Louis Cavagnari, with his whole suite, was murdered by a fanatic mob in Kabul. Upon this the English took possession of his capital. Yakub Khan was taken to India as prisoner, and in the escort which accompanied the dethroned prince was Colonel Robert Warburton, a very able officer, and decidedly the one who best knew the border tribes, and who had been posted for years at the entrance to the Khyber Pass.

This officer (later Sir Robert Warburton), after his return to England, published his experiences in a book entitled *Eighteen Years in the Khyber (1879 to 1898), with Portraits, Maps, and Illustrations*. London: John Murray, 1900. In this book we read on pp. 89-90 the following:—

“After being introduced to Emir Yakub Khan, and seeing that all his wants were satisfied, I ventured to ask a question harking back to the time when Arminius Vambéry, after having seen Khiva and Bokhara, arrived at Herat and appeared in



Sardar Muhammed Yakub Khan's presence. Mr. Vambéry, in his book, states that, having given the benediction, he sat down next to the Sardar, and pushed his wazir to one side with a good deal of violence.

"The young Sardar, peering into his face, said : '*Walla au billa Faringhi hasti*. This Vambéry denied, and the conversation was then changed. Having reminded Amir Yakub Khan of the above circumstance, I asked him if he had identified Mr. Vambéry as a European, and on what grounds. The ex-Emir said : 'I was seated in an upper chamber watching a parade of my troops, and the band was playing on the open ground in front of my window. I noticed a man beating time to the music of the band with his foot. I knew at once that he must be a European, as Asiatics are not in the habit of doing this. Later on, when this man came into my darbar, I charged him with being a Faringhi, which he denied. However, I did not press the matter, being afraid that if suspicion had been roused against him, his life might not have been safe.'

"The same circumstance has been told to me by Sardar Muhammed Hassan Khan, six weeks before Emir Yakub Khan's arrival at Jellalabad. It may be noted that Sardar Yakub Khan and he were both at Herat when Mr. A. Vambéry journeyed there after his wonderful adventures and vicissitudes in Central Asia. Strange it must seem to have associated hourly for months throughout his dangerous travels in Khiva and Bokhara with his Dervish companions, to have shared in all their meals and joined in all their prayers, and yet to have defied all detection ; and then to have been discovered by one keen-eyed observer for beating time with his foot to the music of an improvised European band, playing in the glaxis of the fortress of Herat ! "

Yes, Sir Robert Warburton's surprise is quite justified. I am astonished myself that such a thing should have happened to me, and that Melpomene should have betrayed me. I can only explain this by the fact that I, who have always been a lover of music, upon hearing the strains of European music for the first time after many years, unconsciously began to beat time with my foot. Under the influence of those sounds recalling the West, I had entirely forgotten hunger, misery, and the dangers that threatened me especially among the fanatic Afghans, so forcible

an impression did these tones from home make upon me in that foreign country.

Besides these three authentic bits of news, which I heard by chance, I also received other vague information through pilgrims from Central Asia who visited the Bokhara-Tekkesi (monastery) in Constantinople. My incognito travels have become quite legendary in Turkestan.

Hadji Bilal, my most intimate friend in the pilgrims' caravan with which we travelled, who visited Mecca and Medina in the seventies, remained firm in his belief in my Moslemism ; he even asserted that if I had adopted an incognito at all, it was decidedly rather in Europe than in Asia, and that my *Christianity* was apocryphal. How far he was right in his supposition the reader of these memoirs can judge for himself.

In the matter of prejudice, superstition, and fanaticism, there is only this difference between the West, which is so proud of its civilisation, and uncultivated Asia, that in the West human passions are restrained by the laws of more advanced civilisation, and the adherents of foreign religious or political opinions, are exposed to less dangers in public life than in Asia where lawlessness and anarchy afford no protection.

Unfortunately I made bitter experiences in this respect. Where my origin was unknown, my career so full of struggles found much more acknowledgment than in those circles in which I, as a Jew, was defamed, and from the very beginning marked as a liar and deceiver. It was the same with my political opinions. Until the Franco-Russian alliance was strengthened I had many friends in France, but I lost them all the moment I took up my position as anti-Russian writer, in England's interest in Asia. Even in England I was made to feel the effect of political quarrels amongst the various parties. Mr. Ashton Dilke, a furious Liberal and a pro-Russian, in conjunction with Herr Eugen Schuyler, secretary to the American Embassy at St. Petersburg (whose ancestor took a prominent part against England in the American War of Independence), took it into his head to represent my journey through Central Asia as fiction, and attacked me in the *Athenæum* No. 2,397. He asserted that I, a connoisseur of Oriental languages, had never been in Bokhara nor

Samarkand, and had written my book with no other foundation than the facts I had collected in the Bosphorus, and as a proof of this assertion it was said that I had described the famous nephrit stone on the tomb of Timour as green, whereas in reality it was blue. Little or no notice was taken of this attack by my friends in England, and I was not a little surprised when the noted Russian orientalist, Mr. W. Grigorieff, declared in *Russki Mir* that this attack on the authenticity of my journey was ridiculous and inadmissible, and designated me as an audacious and remarkable traveller of recent date, though he had sharply criticised my *History of Bokhara* some time before.

Considering my strongly marked opposition to Russia, this trick of holding out a saving hand seems rather strange; but the kindness evinced missed its aim, for my political works continued to be anti-Russian.

Also Mr. Schuyler, the American diplomatist, in spite of the hatred he bore to England, changed his tone in time; for when he visited Budapest in 1886, I received the following letter from him:—

“BUDAPEST, HOTEL KÖNIGIN VON ENGLAND,

“Monday, November 8, 1886.

“DEAR MR. VAMBÉRY,—

“If you are willing to overlook some hasty criticisms of mine when I was in Central Asia, and will receive me, I shall be most happy to call upon you.

“Believe me, dear sir, yours most sincerely,

“EUGENE SCHUYLER.”

Of course I overlooked the “hasty criticisms,” gave Mr. Schuyler a warm reception, and have corresponded with him ever since. I have only mentioned this incident to prove how very unstable criticism sometimes is, and how very often the private interests of religion or of politics can lead to the attack on a man’s character and his honour.

A certain Professor William Davies (?) took it into his head to give lectures as pseudo-Vambéry, and for the sake of greater resemblance even feigned lameness, but was unmasked by my deceased friend, Professor Kiepert, on the 22nd of January, 1868;

others again tried to represent me as an impostor, and discredited the result of my dangers and privations from personal motives.

I have had endless opportunities of studying human nature in all its phases. It seemed as though an unkind fate refused to remove the bitter chalice from my lips, and if, in spite of all, I never lost courage, nor my lively disposition, I have only my love of work to thank for it; it drew a veil over all that was unpleasant, and permitted me to gaze joyfully from my workroom on the outside world. Unfavourable criticism, which no man of letters can escape, least of all an explorer who has met with uncommon experiences, never offended or hurt me. But what was most unpleasant was the thorn of envy the pricks of which I was made to feel, and the attacks made with evil designs, in which the Russian press excelled.

Madame de Novikoff, *née* Olga Kireef, did her utmost to discredit me in England, and in order to blunt the point of my anti-Russian pen, she suddenly discovered that I was no Hungarian, but a fraudulent Jew who had never been in Asia at all, but only wished to undermine the good relations between England and Russia. This skilled instrument of Russian politics on the Thames, rejoiced in the friendship of Mr. Gladstone, but her childish attacks on me have had little effect in shaking my position and reputation among the British public.

With the exception of such incidents I had reason to be content with the criticism of my adventurous journey.

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## APPENDIX II

### MY SCIENTIFIC-LITERARY ACTIVITY

MY many years of practical study of the Asiatic world, of which I have attempted to give an account in the preceding pages, were necessarily followed as soon as I had leisure and quiet by a period of literary activity. During those years of travel such a

vast amount of material had been accumulating that I must needs put some of it in writing, and relate some of the things I had seen and experienced. And now that the beautiful summertime of my life is past, and I look back upon that period of literary work, I must preface my account of these labours by stating that in point of quantity, quality, and tendency these productions were quite in keeping with my previous studies. A self-educated man, without any direction or guidance in my studies, without even a definite object in view, my literary career must necessarily also be full of the weaknesses, faults, and deficiencies of the self-made man. Just as there are poets by nature, so I was a scholar by nature, but as there is not and could not be a "*scientifica licentia*," in the same way as there is a "*poetica licentia*," so the difficulties I had to fight against were proportionally as great as the deficiencies and blunders which criticism rightly detected in my works. Hasty and rash as I had been in acquiring knowledge (for which a powerful memory and a fiery zeal are chiefly to blame), I was equally impatient to accomplish the work on hand. When once I had begun to write a book, I gave myself neither rest nor peace until I saw it finished and printed on my table, regardless of the saying, "*Nonum prematur in annum*." Unfortunately my labour lay chiefly in as yet unfrequented regions of philology and ethnography, consequently the authorities at my disposal were very limited, and the few that were available were hardly worth consulting, so I did not trouble with them.

Besides, to make a thorough study of ancient authorities went quite against the grain with me. I did not care to be always referring to what others had said and done and to enter into minute speculations and criticisms in regard to them. To use the expression—I objected to chew the cud that others had eaten. From a strictly scientific point of view this was no doubt a grave fault in me. It has always been the novel, the unknown, and untold which attracted me. Only quite new subjects took my fancy, only in those regions did I burn with desire to earn my literary spurs, and although I had not much fear of any one overtaking me in the race, I was for ever hurrying and hankering after novelty and originality, not to say fresh revelations. I was always in a rush, and so did not give the necessary care and attention to



the work on hand. When in the biographical notices about my insignificant person, which have appeared from time to time, I see myself described as a learned man, this most unfitting qualification always surprises me, for I am anything but learned in the ordinary sense of the word, and could not possibly be. To be a scholar one needs preparation, schooling, and disposition, all of which I lacked ; of a scholar one can say, "*Non nascitur sed fit*," while all through my life, in all my sayings and doings I have always acted under the influence of my naturally good or bad qualities, and have been solely guided by these. The dark side and the disadvantages of such a character do undoubtedly weigh heavily, but the mischief done is to a certain extent rectified by its very decided advantages. Lack of caution makes one bold and daring, and where there is no great depth, there is the greater extension over the area one has chosen for one's field of operation. In this manner only can it be explained why my literary activity encompassed such various regions of Oriental knowledge, and why I could act as philologist, geographer, ethnographer, historian, ethnologist, and politician all at once. Of all the weaknesses and absurdities of the so-called learned guild, the conventional modesty of scholars has always been the most hateful and objectionable to me. I loathed nothing so much as the hypocritical hiding of the material advantage which scholars as much as, if not more than other mortals have in view, and nothing is to my mind more despicable than the professed indifference to praise and recognition ; for we all know that scholars and writers are the vainest creatures born.

Since I am not a professional scholar, I need not be modest according to the rules of the trade, and as I am about to speak of my literary activity, and discuss and criticise my own work, I will leave scholarly modesty quite out of the question, and freely and frankly give my opinion on the products of my pen.

#### 1. *Travels in Central Asia.*

This work, which appeared in several editions in various European and Asiatic languages, is interesting reading because of the curious methods of travel and the novelty of the adventures. Incognito journeys had been made before my time to Mecca and

Medina by Burton, Burckhart, Maltzan, Snouck-Hurgronje, and others, but as a Dervish living on alms, and undergoing all the penalties of fakirdom, I was certainly the first and only European. However interesting the account of my adventures may be, the geographico-scientific results of my journey are not in adequate proportion to the dangers and sufferings I underwent. Astronomical observations were impossible, neither was I competent to make them. Orography and hydrography were never touched upon. The fauna and flora were closed books to me, and as for geology, I did not even know this science by name before I came West. But on the other hand, I can point out with pleasure that in certain parts of Central Asia I was the first European traveller, and have contributed many names of places to the map of the region, and furnished many facts hitherto unknown about the ethnographical relations of the Turks in these parts. What made my book of travels popular was unquestionably the account of my adventures and the continual dangers in which I found myself. The European reader can hardly form any conception of my sufferings and privations; they evoked the interest and the sympathy of the cultured world; but he who has read the preceding pages, and is acquainted with the struggles of my childhood and youth, will not be surprised that the early schooling of misery and privation I underwent had sufficiently hardened me to bear the later heavy struggles. The difference between the condition of a poor Jew-boy and a mendicant Dervish in Central Asia is, after all, not very great. The cravings of hunger are not one whit easier to bear or less irksome in cultured Europe than in the Steppes of Asia, and the mental agony of the little Jew, despised and mocked by the Christian world, is perhaps harder than the constant fear of being found out by fanatical Mohammedans. As my first publication was so much appreciated, I enlarged, at the instigation of my friends, my first account, and published—

2. *Sketches from Central Asia,*

in which on the one hand I elaborated the account of my adventures with fresh incidents, and on the other introduced those ethnographical, political, and economic data which I was un-



able to incorporate in my traveller's account written in London, as the documents needed for this were left behind at home in Pest. With this book, likewise translated in several languages, I attracted more attention in scientific circles, in consequence of which I was nominated honorary member of a geographical society; but still from a scientific point of view this book does not deserve much attention, for in spite of many new data, it is altogether too fragmentary, and bears the unmistakable stamp of *dilettantism*. To be an expert ethnologist I ought to have known much more about anthropology and anatomy, and particularly the want of measurements indispensable to anthropological researches, made it impossible for me to furnish accurate descriptive delineations. Only the part about the political situation, *i.e.*, the rivalry between England and Russia in Central Asia, was of any real value. This part, which first appeared in the columns of the periodical *Unsere Zeit*, was freely commented upon and discussed in official and non-official circles. To this article I owe my introduction into political literature, and at the same time the animosity of Russia, I might say the violent anger which the Russian press has ever since expressed at the mention of my name. In Chapter VIII. I have referred more fully to this part of my literary career, and will only mention here that I did not enter upon this course with any special purpose in view, or with any sense of pleasure. All I cared for was to make known my purely philological experiences, and accordingly as soon as I returned from London I set to work upon my—

### 3. *Chagataic Linguistic Studies.*

The fact that I, a self-taught man, with no scholastic education—a man who was no grammarian, and who had but very vague notions about philology in general should dare to venture on a philological work, and that, moreover, in German; that I should dare to lay this before the severe forum of expert philology—this, indeed, was almost too bold a stroke, wellnigh on a par with my journey into Central Asia. Fortunately at that time I was still ignorant of the *furor teutonicus*, and the spiteful nature of philologists. I was moving, so to speak, on untrodden ground, for with the exception of the specimen Chagataic passages pub-

lished by Quatremere in his *Chrestomathie Orientale*, and what was published in the original by Baber and Abulghazi, East Turkish was an entirely unknown language to Western Orientalists. I began by giving specimens of national literature, proverbs, and the different dialects of Turkish inner Asia. Then I gave a whole list of East-Turkish books of which no one in Europe had ever heard, and I published the first East-Turkish dictionary which the French scholar Pavel de Courteille incorporated in his later issued work, *Dictionnaire Turk-Oriental*. He says in his preface, "J'avoue tout de suite, que j'ai mis à contribution ce dictionnaire, en insérant dans mon travail autant que je le pouvais, le livre le plus instructif qui fait grand honneur à son auteur," as he called this my first philological production (Preface, p. xi.). But still more did it surprise me to find that the Russian Orientalist, Budagow, who was so much nearer akin to this branch of philology, used my work in his elaborate dictionary; and so, although the critical press took little notice of my first philological efforts, I was nevertheless encouraged to persevere, and began to realise that without being a scholarly linguist one can yet do useful work in this line. "It is but the first step that costs," says the proverb. My Chagataic linguistic studies were soon followed by isolated fragments on this subject, and the more readily they were received the deeper I endeavoured to penetrate into the ancient monuments of the Turkish language. As a result of these efforts appeared my—

#### 4. *Uiguric Linguistic Monuments,*

which was one of the hardest and best paying labours I accomplished in Turkology, and which advanced me to the title of specialist in Turkish languages. From the *Turkish Grammar* by Davids, and an article of Joubert's in the *Journal Asiatique*, I had heard of the existence of a mysterious Uiguric manuscript, and when Lord Strangford, moreover, drew my attention to it, and advised me to try and decipher it, I burned with ambition, and did not rest until I had secured the loan of this precious manuscript from the Imperial Library at Vienna. The faint, uncertain characters, the value of which I had to guess in many cases, the curious wording, and the peculiarly original contents of the text,

exercised an overpowering charm over me. For more than a year I gazed daily for hours at the sybillic signs, until at last I succeeded bit by bit in reading and understanding the manuscript. My joy was boundless. I immediately decided to publish the deciphered portion, and when, after much trouble and expense, for the type had first to be made, I saw the imposing quarto before my eyes, I really believed I had accomplished an important work. I was strengthened in this idea by the extremely appreciative comments of my colleagues, and yet it was but a delusion, for my knowledge of the dialects in the northern and north-easterly frontier districts of the Turkish languages, was not sufficient to enable me to understand the entire manuscript, and to accomplish the deciphering of the entire document. My better qualified and more thoroughly versed successor, Dr. W. Radloff, was able to show better results at once, and the only satisfaction that remains to me from this laborious task is the fact that to me belongs the right of priority; and that Dr. Radloff, following in my footsteps, attained after thirty years a higher standpoint and wider view, is due in a large measure to the fact that in course of time he managed to secure a copy of the *Kudatku Biliks* written in Arabic characters, and consequently more legible.

And so my *Uiguric Linguistic Monuments*, in spite of many faults and defects, ranks among the showpieces of my scientific-literary activity. In any case I had proved that without being a schooled philologist one can be a pioneer in this line. Following up this only partially successful experiment, I continued for some time my researches in the field of Turkology. I wrote an—

##### 5. *Etymological Dictionary of the Turkish Language,*

the first ever written on this subject of philology, in which, without any precedent, I collected, criticised and compared, until I succeeded in finding out the stems and roots, and ranged them into separate families. On this slippery path, on which even the greatest authorities in philology sometimes stumble, and by their awkward fall bring their colleagues with them and amuse the world, I, with my inadequate knowledge of the subject, stumbled and slipped all the oftener. In spite of all this, how-

ever, even my bitterest rival could not deny that I had succeeded in unravelling the etymology of a considerable number of Turkish words, and in giving a concrete meaning to many abstract conceptions. So mighty is the magic charm of discovery that for months together, by day and by night, I could think of nothing but Turkish root-words, and as I generally worked from memory, and never in my life, so to speak, took any notes, it was a real joy to me to follow up the transitions and changes of an idea to its remotest origin. As a matter of fact this kind of study, apart from my inadequate knowledge, was not at all in keeping with my tendencies. Under the delusive cover of etymological recreation the dry monotony of the study soon became irksome, and I was quite pleased when this etymological pastime led me to the investigation of the—

6. *Primitive Culture of the Turko-Tartar People.*

Here I felt more at home and stood on more congenial ground, for here philology served as a telescope, with which I could look into the remotest past of Turkish tribe-life, and discover many valuable details of the ethnical, ethical and social conditions of the Turk. As I have made up my mind to be entirely frank and open in this criticism of my own work, I am bound to say that I consider this little book one of the best productions of my pen. It abounds in valuable suggestions, mere suggestions unfortunately, about the ethnology of the Turk, which could only flow from the pen of a travelling philologist who united to a knowledge of the language, a penetration into the customs, character and views in general of the people under consideration, and who had it all fresh in his mind and could speak from practical experience. The recognition which this little book received from my fellow-philologists was most gratifying to me, and was the chief cause which led me to write about—

7. *The Turkish People in their Ethnological and Ethnographical Relationship.*

In this work, planned on a much larger scale, I endeavoured to incorporate my personal experiences of the Turks in general,

and also to introduce the notes and extracts gleaned on this subject from European and Asiatic literature. In both these efforts I had certain advantages over others. In the first place no ethnographer had ever had such long and intimate intercourse with members of this nation, and secondly, there were not many ethnographers who could avail themselves as well as I could of the many-tongued sources of information. Here again I found myself on untrodden paths, and the accomplished work had the general defects and charms of a first effort. On the whole it was favourably criticised, and I was therefore the more surprised that the book had such a very limited sale. I flattered myself I had written a popular book, or at least a book that would please the reading public, and I was grievously disappointed when, after a lapse of ten years, not three hundred copies had been sold. I came to the conclusion that the public at large troubles itself very little about the origin, customs and manners, the ramifications and tribal relationships of the Turks, and that geography and ethnography were only appreciated by the reading public as long as they were well flavoured with stirring adventures. In my book about the Turkish people I gave a general survey of all the tribes and branches of the race collectively, and although no such work had ever been written about any other Asiatic tribal family, I was mistaken as to its success. In spite of my favourable literary position in England, all my endeavours to issue an English edition of this work were in vain.

East Turkish, both in language and literature, being one of my favourite studies, and always giving me new thoughts and ideas, I published simultaneously with my *Turkish People*, an Ösbeğ epic poem entitled—

#### 8. *The Sheibaniade*,

which I copied from the original manuscript in the Imperial Library at Vienna during several summer vacations, and afterwards printed at my own expense. The copying was a tedious business. The writing of 4,500 double stanzas tried my eyes considerably, but the historical and linguistic value of the poem were well worth the trouble. It is a unique copy. Neither in Europe nor in Asia have I ever heard of the existence of a duplicate, and it was



therefore well worth while to make it accessible for historical research. The beautiful edition of this work, with facsimile and a chromo-photographic title page, cost me nearly fourteen hundred florins, and as scarcely sixty copies were sold I did not get back a fourth of the sum laid out upon it. The scientific criticism was limited to one flattering notice in the *Journal Asiatique*. The rest of the literati, even Orientalists, hardly deigned to take any notice of my publication, for the number of students of this particular branch of Oriental languages was, and is still, very small in Europe ; even in Russia it does not yet receive the attention it so richly deserves.

I can therefore not blame myself that I was urged on in this branch of my literary career by the hope of moral or material gain ; it was simply my personal liking and predilection which made me pursue these subjects. Only occasionally, when forced thereto by material needs, perhaps also sometimes for the sake of a change, I left my favourite study and turned to literary work which could command a larger public and give me a better chance of making money by it.

Thus it came about that soon after my return from Central Asia I published the account of my—

#### 9. *Wanderings and Experiences in Persia.*

But this was familiar ground, fully and accurately described elsewhere, both geographically and ethnographically. It was at most my exciting personal adventures as pseudo-Sunnite amongst the Shiites which could lay claim to any special interest, perhaps also to some extent its casual connection with my later wanderings in Central Asia ; for the rest, however, this volume has little value, and with the exception of England, Germany, Sweden, and Hungary, where translations appeared, it has attracted no notice to speak of. Not much better fared my—

#### 10. *Moral Pictures from the Orient.*

This had already appeared in part in a German periodical, *Westermann's Monthly*, and was further enlarged with sketches of family life in Turkey, Persia, and Central Asia, interspersed

with personal observations on the religious and social customs of these people. As far as I know there are, besides the original German edition, a Danish and a Hungarian translation of this work, but although much read and discussed, this book has not been of much, if any, material benefit to me, beyond the honorarium paid me by the "Society of German literature." With this book I have really contributed to the knowledge of the Orient in the regions named just as with my—

### 11. *Islam in the Nineteenth Century*

I directed the attention of the reading public to those social and political reforms which our intervention and our reformatory efforts in the Moslem East have called forth ; but practically both the one and the other were failures. It was not at all my intention to write a sort of defence of Islam, as was generally imagined, but I endeavoured, on the contrary, to show up the mistakes, weaknesses and prejudices which characterised this transition period, indeed I ruthlessly tore away the veil ; but on the other hand I did not hesitate to lay bare our own neglects and faults. My object was to correct the judgment of Europe in regard to the Moslem society of Asia, and to point out that with patience and a little less egotism and greed we should accomplish more ; that we are not yet justified in looking upon Islam as a society condemned to destruction, and in breaking the staff over it. As a purely theoretical study, perhaps also on account of my very liberal religious notions expressed therein, I have not been able to publish this book in England ; hence the circle of readers was very limited, but all the more select, and I had the satisfaction of having stirred up a very serious question.

A book which, to my great surprise, had an extraordinary success was my publication in English of the—

### 12. *Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry, written by Himself,*

which in a very short time passed through seven editions, and was extraordinarily popular in England, America and Australia. It is in reality one of my most insignificant, unpretentious



literary efforts, written at the request of my English publisher, and is by no means worthy of the reception it had. This made me realise the truth of the proverb: "*Habent sua fata libelli,*" for the book is nothing but a recapitulation of my wanderings, including my experiences in Turkey and Persia, which were now for the first time brought before the English public. But what chiefly secured its friendly reception was a few short paragraphs about my early life, a short *resumé* of the first chapter of the present work, and these details from the life of a self-made man did not fail to produce an impression upon the strongly developed individuality of the Anglo-Saxon race. I am not sure how many editions it went through, but I have evident proofs of the strong hold this book had upon all ranks and classes of English-speaking people. Comments and discussions there were by the hundred, and private letters expressive of readers' appreciation kept flowing in to me from the three parts of the world.

Curiously enough this book excited interest only with the Anglo-Saxons; to this day it has not been translated in any other foreign language, not even in my Hungarian mother-tongue. Society in Eastern Europe still suffers from the old-world delusion that nobility of blood is everything, and considers that it could not possibly condescend to be edified by the experiences of a poorly-born man of obscure origin; but the Anglo-Saxon with his liberal notions revels in the story of the terrible struggles of the poor Jewish boy, the servant and the teacher, and of what he finally accomplished. This is the chief reason which made the most insignificant of my books so popular with the Anglo-Saxons, a book with which I promulgated more knowledge about Moslem Asia than with all my other works put together, more even than many highly learned disquisitions of stock-Orientalists.

I will not deny that the unexpected success of this book was my principal inducement in writing the present Autobiography.

In my various literary productions I had chiefly aimed at a diffusing of general knowledge about the Moslem East, but at home (in Hungary) I had often been reproached with absolute neglect as regards the national Magyar side of my studies. I therefore decided to publish my views about the—

13. *Origin of the Magyars*

in a separate volume. In different scientific articles I had already hinted at the manner in which I intended to treat this still open question. I pointed out that Árpád and his warriors who, towards the close of the ninth century founded what is now Hungary, were most certainly Turkish nomads forming a north-westerly branch of the Turkish chain of nationalities ; that they pushed forward from the Ural, across the Volga, into Europe, and established in Pannonia what is now the State of Hungary. The ethnology and the language of the Magyars is a curious mixture of dialects, for the Turkish nomads during their wanderings incorporated into their language many kindred Finnish-Ugrian elements, and in the lowlands of Hungary they came upon many ethnological remains of the same original stock. All these various elements gradually amalgamated and formed the people and the language of Hungary as it is now. Considering this problematic origin, and the elasticity of philological speculation, it stands to reason that much has been written and argued in Hungary about the origin of the nation. Many different views were held, and at the time that I joined in the discussion, the theory of the Finnish-Ugrian descent of the Magyars held the upper hand. My labour, therefore, was directed against these, for on the ground of my personal experiences in the manner of living and the migrations of the Turkish nomads in general, based upon historical evidence, I endeavoured to prove the Turkish nationality of Árpád and his companions. I conceded the mixed character of the language with the reservation, however, that in the amalgamation not the Finnish-Ugrian but the Turko-Tartar element predominated. Philologists opposed this view in their most zealous and ablest representative, Doctor Budenz, a German by birth ; he pleaded with all the enthusiasm of an etymological philologist for the eminently Ugrian character of the Magyar tongue. The arguments of the opposing party were chiefly based upon what they considered the sacred and fundamental rules of comparative philology ; but to me these threw no light upon the matter, and were not likely to convince me of my error. The struggle,

which my fanatical opponents made into a personal matter, lasted for some time, but the old Latin proverb: "*Philologi certant, tamen sub iudice lis*," again proved true in this case. The etymological Salto Mortales and the grammatical violence of the opposing school had rudely shaken my confidence in the entire apparatus of comparative philology. I realised that with such evidence one might take any one Ural-Altaic language and call it the nearest kindred tongue of the Magyar. The etymological connection between the Tartar words "tongue" and "navel"—because both are long, hanging objects—and the use of fictitious root-words to explain the inexplicable, with which my learned opponent tried to justify his theory, were altogether too fantastic and too airy for my practical notions. So I gave up the struggle and satisfied myself with the result that the home-bred Magyars were no longer exclusively considered to be of Finnish-Ugrian extraction, as used to be the case, and that even my bitterest opponent had to allow the possibility that Árpád and his warriors were originally Turks.

The learned world outside naturally took but little part in this essentially Magyar controversy, and I was, therefore, all the more pleased to see Ranke, the Nestor of German historical research, siding with me. He referred to the historical evidence of one Ibn Dasta and Porphyrogenitus, who had declared that the Magyars overrunning Hungary at the close of the ninth century were Turks. In Hungary itself the majority of the public shared my views, and the seven hundred copies of the first edition of my book were sold in three days.

This, of course, was due more to the national and political than to the purely scientific interest of the question, since the Magyars, proud of their Asiatic origin, very much disliked, nay even thought it insulting that their ancestors should have to claim blood-relationship with poor barbarians of high northern regions, living by fishing and hunting, Ostiaks, Vogules, and such like racial fragments. The Hungarian priding himself on his warlike spirit, his valour, and his independence, would rather claim relationship with Huns and Avars, depicted by the mediæval Christian world as terror-spreading, mighty warriors; and the national legend correctedly accepted this view, for as

my further researches revealed, and as I tried to prove in my subsequent book, entitled—

14. *Growth and Spread of the Magyars,*

the present Magyar nation has proceeded from a gradual, scarcely definable settlement of Ural-Altaic elements in the lowlands of Hungary. Originally as warriors and protectors of the Slavs settled in Pannonia, they became afterwards their lords and masters, something like the Franks in Gaul and the Varangians in Russia, with this difference, however, that the latter exchanged their language for that of their subjects, and became lost among the masses of the subjugated people, while the Magyars to this day have preserved their language and their national individuality intact, and in course of time were able to establish a Magyar ethnography. Looking at it from this point of view, not Asia but the middle Danube-basin becomes the birthplace of Magyarism. Its mixed ethnography, formerly known by various appellations, became through its martial proclivities a terror to the Christian West, and compelled Charlemagne to bring a strong Christian coalition against it in the field. This first crusade of the Occident, bent but did not break the power of the Ural-Altaic warriors, who ruled from the Moldau as far as the borders of Upper Austria; for the remnants retiring behind the Theis soon after received reinforcements from a tribe of Turks known as the “Madjars,” *i.e.*, Magyars, under the command of Árpád, whose descendants accepted Christianity and established the Hungary of the present day, both politically and ethnically.

Curiously enough this ethnological discussion was not at all agreeable to my so-called paleo-Magyar compatriots. The romantic legend of the invasion of Árpád into Pannonia with his many hundred thousand warriors, sounds more beautiful in the ears of the Magyar patriots, than their prosaic derivation from a confused ethnical group; as if there were any single nation in Europe which is not patched and pieced together from the most diverse elements, and only in later times has presented itself as an undivided whole. In the Hungarians, however, this childish vanity is the more ridiculous since it is much more glorious, as a

small national fragment, to play for centuries the rôle of conqueror, and in the strength of its national proclivities to absorb other elements, than to conquer with the sword and then to be absorbed in the conquered element as Franks, Varangians, and others have been. Truly nations, as well as individuals, have to pass through an infant stage, and I am not surprised that this conception of mine, and my solution of the ethnological problem, did not find much favour in Hungary.

Before concluding this review of my scientific-literary activity, I should mention that I also have ventured into the regions of history, a totally unknown field to me, wherein, as is the case with many hazardous expeditions, I betrayed more temerity than forethought. My book on the—

15. *History of Bokhara,*

in two volumes, published in German, Hungarian, English, and Russian, has done more harm than good to my literary reputation. The motive for writing this book was the purchase of some Oriental manuscripts I discovered in Bokhara, which, I thought, were unknown in Europe. To some extent this was the case, for of *Tarikhi Narshakhi*, and the history of *Seid Rakim Khan* both of which furnish rich material for the history of Central Asia, our Orientalists had never heard. But in the main I was working under a delusion, owing to my insufficient literary knowledge; some passages, especially in the ancient history of Central Asia, had already been worked out by learned scholars, and it was only about modern times that I could tell anything new.

Professional critics were merciless. They seemed to take a malicious pleasure in running me down; especially was this the case in Russia, where I was already hated for my political opinions and activity. The Oriental historian, Professor Grigorieff, made a special point of proving the worthlessness of my book, and tried to annihilate the anti-Russian publishers. The second *criticus furiosus* was Professor von Gutschmid, a learned man, but also a nobleman of the purest blood, who for his God and king entered the arena and also wanted to wreak his anger upon me because he took me for a German renegade,



and for my desertion of the bonds of Germanism considered me worthy of censure. For his well-deserved correction of my scientific blunders I am grateful to the man, but I deny the accusation of being a renegade. I have never quite understood why in Germany the honour of German nationality should be forced upon me ; why I should be taken for a Hamburger, a Dresdener, a Stuttgarter, since my ancestors for several generations were born Hungarians, and my education had been strictly Magyar.

It is this very Magyar education, and the complete amalgamation of myself with the ruling national spirit of my native land which induced me to Magyarise my German name, as has been the custom with us for centuries. Considering that Germans with purely French, Italian, Danish, Slav, and other names figure in German literature and politics, without the purity of their German descent being at all questioned, one might readily regard the Hungarian custom of Magyarising our names as childish and unmotivated. Yet this is not so. Small nations like Hungary, constantly threatened with the danger of denationalisation, all the more anxiously guard their national existence in the sanctity of their language, and tenaciously hold to their national characteristics. With such people it is quite natural that they should lay more stress than is absolutely necessary upon the outward signs. The Hungarian born, who in his feelings, thoughts, and aspirations, owns himself a true Hungarian, desires also in name to appear as a Hungarian, because he does not want to be mixed up with any foreign nationality, as might easily be the case with a prominent writer. On these grounds Petrovich has become Petöfi, Schedel Toldy, Hundsdorfer Hunfalvi, etc., and for this reason also I Magyarised my name.

But to come back to my *History of Bokhara*, I must honestly confess that the ambition of writing the first history of Transoxania brought me more disillusionment than joy, for in spite of the praise bestowed upon me by the uninitiated, I had soon to realise that I had not studied the subject sufficiently, and had not made enough use of available material.

I fared somewhat better with my second purely historical work, published simultaneously in America and England—

16. *The Story of Hungary.*

In this I had but the one object in view, namely to introduce the history of my native land into the series called "The Story of the Nations." As I wrote only a few chapters myself, and am indebted for the rest to Hungarian men of the profession, I can only lay claim to the title of editor, but this literary sponsorship gave me much pleasure, for the *History of Hungary*, which first appeared in English, and was afterwards translated into different languages, has had a sale it could never have had in Hungary itself. The service hereby rendered to my compatriots has, however, never been appreciated at home ; the very existence of the book has been ignored.

This closes the list of my personal publications, partly scientific, partly popular, in the course of twenty years. Of my journalistic activity during this same term, I have spoken already (Chap. VIII.).

I cannot hide the fact that as I increased in years my creative power visibly decreased. What I learned in the sixties, or rather tried to learn, did not long remain in my memory, and could not be called material from which anything of lasting value could be made. Only the custom of many years' active employment urged me on to labour, and under the influence of this incitement appeared my smaller works.

1. *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis, in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Persia, during the years 1553-1556.* London, 1899.

2. *Noten Zu den Alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei und Sibiens.* Helsingfors, 1899. (Notes to the Old Turkish Inscriptions of Mongolia and Siberia.)

3. *Alt-Osmanische Sprachstudien.* Leiden, 1901. (Old Osmanli Linguistic Studies.)

It never entered my mind to try to attract the special attention of the profession with these unassuming contributions. It is not given to all, as to a Mommsen, Herbert Spencer, Ranke, Schott, and others, to boast of unenfeebled mental powers in their old



age. *Sunt atque fines!* And he who disregards the approach of the winter of life is apt to lose the good reputation gained in better days.

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## APPENDIX III

## MY RELATIONS WITH THE MOHAMMEDAN WORLD

I WILL here shortly relate in what manner I became connected with the Mohammedans of India. My own depressing circumstances at the time of my sojourn in Asia had given me a fellow-feeling with the downtrodden, helpless population of the East, and the more I realised the weakness of Asiatic rule and government, the more I was compelled to draw angry comparisons between the condition of things there and in Western lands. Since then my judgment of human nature has become enlarged, and consequently more charitable, but at the time I am speaking of, the more intimately I became acquainted with the conditions of the various countries of Europe the more clearly I seemed to see the causes of the decline in the East. Our exalted Western professions of righteousness and justice after all did not amount to much. Christianity seemed as fanatical as Islam itself, and before very long I came to the conclusion that our high-sounding efforts at civilisation in the East were but a cloak for material aggression and a pretext for conquest and gain. All this roused my indignation and enlisted my sympathies with the peoples of the Islamic world. My heart went out in pity towards the helpless victims of Asiatic tyranny, despotism, and anarchy, and when an occasional cry was raised in some Turkish, Persian or Arabic publication for freedom, law and order, the call appealed to me strongly and I felt compelled to render what assistance I could. This was the beginning of my pro-Islamic literary activity, and as a first result I would mention my work on *Islam in the Nineteenth Century*, followed by several short articles. Later I proceeded from writing to public speaking, and I delivered lectures in various parts of England, a specimen of which was my lecture in Exeter Hall, in

May, 1889, when I took for my subject "The Progress of Culture in Turkey." The fame of these lectures resounded not only in Turkey but also among the Moslems of South Russia, Java, Africa and India; for the day of objective unbiassed criticism of Islam was gradually passing away. In India the free institutions of the English had awakened among the Mohammedan population also an interest in the weal or woe of their religious communities. In Calcutta the "Mohammedan Literary Society," under the presidency of the learned Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur, was already making itself prominent, and shortly after my lecture at Exeter Hall, I received an account of the history of the Society, and its president, in a warmly worded letter accompanying it, expressed his thanks for my friendly interest in the affairs of Islam. I made use of this opportunity to address a letter to the Mohammedans of India, explaining the grounds for my Moslem sympathies, encouraging the Hindustani to persevere in the adopted course of modern culture, and by all means to hold fast to the English Government, the only free and humane power of the West. This letter ran as follows:—

"BUDAPEST UNIVERSITY,

"*August, 12, 1889.*

"My DEAR NAWAB,—I beg to acknowledge with many, many thanks the receipt of the valuable and highly interesting pamphlets you so kindly sent me, on the rise, growth and activity of the Mohammedan Literary Society of Calcutta. Being deeply interested in the welfare and cultural development of the Mohammedan world, I have long watched with the greatest attention the progress of the Society created and so admirably presided over by yourself. I need scarcely say that I much appreciate the opportunity now afforded me of entering into personal relations with a man of your abilities, patriotism, and sincere devotion to your fellow countrymen.

"The greater part of my life has been devoted to the study of Mohammedan nations and countries, and I feel the keenest interest in the work of the Calcutta Literary Society of Mohammedans, which proves most eloquently that a nation whose sacred book contains the saying, 'Search for wisdom from the cradle to the grave,' will not and cannot lag behind in culture, and that

Islam still has it in its power to revive the glory of the middle ages, when the followers of the Koran were the torchbearers of civilisation.

“From a political point of view, also, I must congratulate you on what you have done in showing your co-religionists the superiority of Western culture as seen in the English administration, in contrast to the dim or false light shed abroad from elsewhere. I am not an Englishman, and I do not ignore the shortcomings and mistakes of English rule in India, but I have seen much of the world both in Europe and Asia, and studied the matter carefully, and I can assure you that England is far in advance of the rest of Europe in point of justice, liberality, and fair-dealing with all entrusted to her care.

“You and your fellow-workers among the Indian Mohammedans, the successors of Khalid, may justly pride yourselves on having introduced Monotheism into India; it is your privilege and your duty by advice and example to lead the people of Hindustan to choose suitable means for modernising your matchless but antiquated culture. Would that Turkey, which is fairly advanced in modern science, could become the instructor and civiliser of the Mohammedan world; but Turkey, alas, is surrounded by enemies and weakened by continual warfare. She has to struggle hard for her own existence and has no chance of attending to her distant co-religionists, much to the grief of her noble and patriotic ruler whom I am proud to call my friend.

“In default of a Moslem leader you have done well to adopt English tutorship in India, and you who are at the head of this movement are certainly rendering good service both to your people and to your faith by encouraging your fellow-believers to follow in the path of Western culture and education. I have not yet quite given up the idea of visiting India, and, circumstances permitting, of delivering some lectures in the Persian tongue to the Mohammedans of India. If I should see my way to doing so, I should like to come under the patronage of your Society, and thus try to contribute a few small stones to the noble building raised by your admirable efforts.

“Pardon the length of this epistle, which I conclude in the hope of the continuance of our correspondence, and I also beg

you kindly to forward to me regularly the publications of your Society.

“Yours faithfully,

“(Sig.) A. VAMBÉRY.

“To Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur, C.I.E., Calcutta.”

I had no idea that this letter would cause any sensation, and I was much surprised to see it published shortly after as a separate pamphlet, with an elaborate preface, and distributed wholesale among the Mohammedans of India. “The leading political event of India”—thus commenced the preface—“is a letter, but not an official or even an open letter. We are not referring to the address of the Viceroy in *propria persona*—as distinguished from the powerful state engine entitled the ‘Governor-General in Council’—to the Maharaja Pertap Singh of Cashmere, for this letter has now been before the public some weeks. The letter we call attention to does not come from high quarters, is not in any way an official one; it is a private communication from a poor, though eminent European pandit (scholar). It was published yesterday in the morning papers and appears in this week’s edition of *Reis and Rayyet*. We refer to Professor Vambéry’s letter to Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur, &c.”

The Indian press occupied itself for days with this letter; it was much commented upon and regarded both by Englishmen and Mohammedans as of great importance. I was invited to visit India as the guest of the Mohammedan Society. I was to be attended by a specially appointed committee, and to make a tour in the country, give public lectures and addresses, and be generally *fêted*. In a word, they wanted to honour me as the friend of England and of Islam. Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur said in a letter dated Calcutta, 16 Toltollah (12th August), 1890:—

“Your name has become a household word amongst us, and, greatly as we honour you for your noble, unflinching advocacy of Islam in the West, we shall esteem it a high privilege to see you with our own eyes, and listen to you with our own ears.”

Remembering the struggles of my early youth, and with a vivid recollection of the insults and humiliations to which I, the

Jew boy, had been subjected in those days, there was something very tempting to me in the thought of going to India, the land of the Rajahs, of wealth and opulence, as an admired and honoured guest. But I was no longer young. I was nearly sixty years old, and at that age sober reality is stronger than vanity. The alluring vision of a reception in India, with eulogies and laurel-wreaths swiftly passed before my eyes, but was instantly dismissed. I declined the invitation with many expressions of gratitude, but kept up my relations with the Mohammedans of India, and also with the Brahmans there, as shown in my correspondence with the highly-cultured editor of the periodical *Reis and Rayyet*, Dr. Mookerjee,<sup>1</sup> with Thakore Sahib (Prince) of Gondal, and other eminent Hindustani scholars and statesmen.

The fact that many of these gentlemen preferably wrote in English, and that some of them even indulged in Latin and Greek quotations, surprised me much at first, for I had not realised that our Western culture had penetrated so far even beyond the precincts of Islam. England has indeed done great things for India, and Bismarck was right when he said, "If England were to lose Shakespeare, Milton, and all her literary heroes, that what she has done for India is sufficient to establish for ever her merit in the world of culture."

My pro-Islamic writings have found much appreciation among the Turkish adherents of the Moslem faith, and my name was well known in Turkey, as I had for many years been writing for the Turkish press, and was in correspondence with several eminent persons there. In consequence of my anti-Russian political writings I had constant intercourse with Tartars from the Crimea and other parts of Russia, who even consulted me in their national and religious difficulties. Some of them asked me for introductions to the Turkish Government, and touching was the sympathy I received from the farthest corners of the Islamic world when once I was confined to bed with a broken leg. Mohammedans from all parts, Osmanlis, Tartars, Persians, Afghans, Hindustanis, in passing through Budapest, scarcely ever

<sup>1</sup> See "*An Indian Journalist*," being the Life and Letters of Dr. S. O. Mookerjee, Calcutta, 1895, pp. 306-315.



failed to call upon me, and to express their gratitude for what little I had done in their interest. Some even suspected me of being a Dervish in disguise, and of using my European incognito in the interests of Islam. This supposition was, I think, mainly due to the stories circulated by some Dervish pilgrims, from all parts of the Islamic world, to the grave of Gülbaba (Rose-father), at Budapest, to whom, as the living reminders of my former adventures, I always gave a most cordial reception.

The Mohammedan saint just mentioned, according to the account of the Osmanli traveller Ewlia Tshelebi (1660), had lived in Hungary before the Turkish dominion, and was buried at Budapest. Soliman's army had revered his grave just as Mohamed II. did that of Ejub in Constantinople after the conquest, and it is touching to note the deep veneration with which this pioneer of Islam is regarded by all true believers in the old world. Turks, Arabs, Persians, Afghans, Indians, Kashmirians, even Tartars from Tobolsk have come to Budapest as pilgrims to his grave, and yet the actual tenets of his faith have never been very clearly defined. At the Peace of Passarowitz the Osmanli stipulated that his grave should be left untouched, and on the other hand the Persian King, Nasreddin Shah, claimed him as a Shiite saint, and even made preparations to restore and embellish his grave.

The Dervish pilgrims regarded this Rose-father with very special devotion. Without money, without any knowledge of the language of the country, they braved all dangers and privations to visit his grave. Some said that he was brother to Kadriye, others that he belonged to the Dshelali order. After spending some days at the humble shrine of the saint, since then beautifully restored, they would come to pay their respects to me also, and I was pleased to receive them. Nothing could be more entertaining than to watch the suspicious glances cast upon me by these tattered, emaciated Moslems. My fluency of speech in their several languages, added to the fame of my character as a Dervish, puzzled them greatly, and, encouraged by my cordiality, some made bold to ask me how much longer I intended to keep up my incognito among the unfaithful, and whether it would not be advisable for me to return to the land of the true believers. In reply I pointed to the life and the work of Sheikh Saadi,

the celebrated author of the *Gulistan* who, himself a Dervish, lived in various lands amid various religions in order to study mankind, and who left behind him a world-known name. Among these dervishes, although possessed of all the peculiarities and attributes of fanaticism, I detected a good deal of scepticism and cosmopolitanism, carefully hidden, of course, but to my mind fully justifying the proverb: "*Qui multum peregrinatur raro sanctificatur*" ("He who travels much, rarely becomes a saint"). These pilgrims, many of whom in their inmost mind shared my views, carried my name into the remotest regions of the Islamic world. The travelling dervishes may be called the living telegraph wires between the upper and lower strata of the Mohammedan world. From the Tekkes (convents) and bazaars, where they mix with people of every class and nationality, the news they bring travels far and wide, and reaches the inmost circles of family life. And so it came about that many years later I was receiving letters from several Asiatics never personally known to me. Through these relations with the middle classes of the Moslem world I afterwards came in contact with the higher ranks of Asiatic society.





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